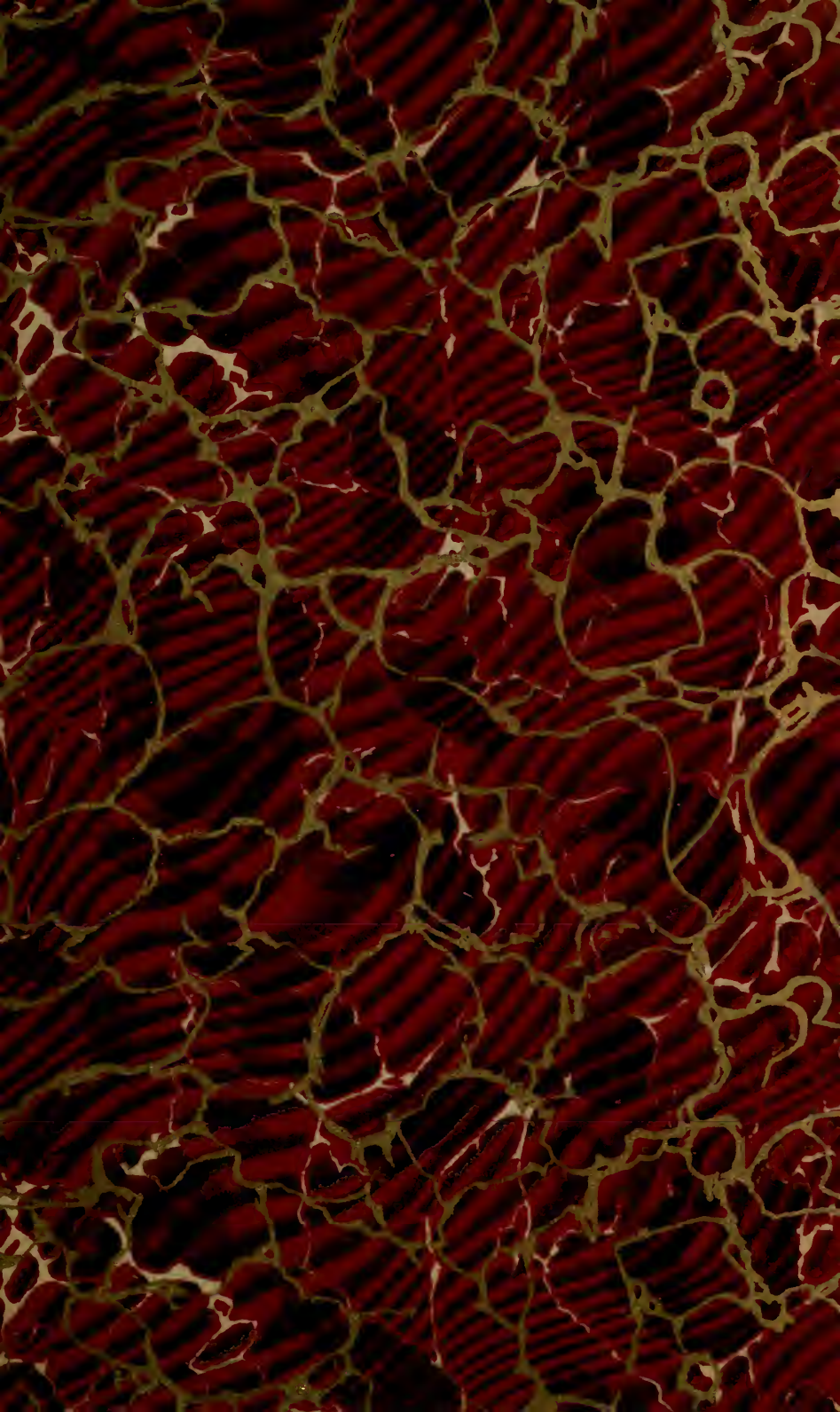
I am a heritage because I bring you years of thought and the lore of time ~ I impart yet I can not speak ~ I have traveled among the peoples of the earth ~ I am a rover ~ Oft-times I stray from the fireside of the one who loves and cherishes me - who misses me when I am gone ~ Should you find me vagrant please send me home - among my brothers - on the book shelves of .....

ALFRED SANTELL



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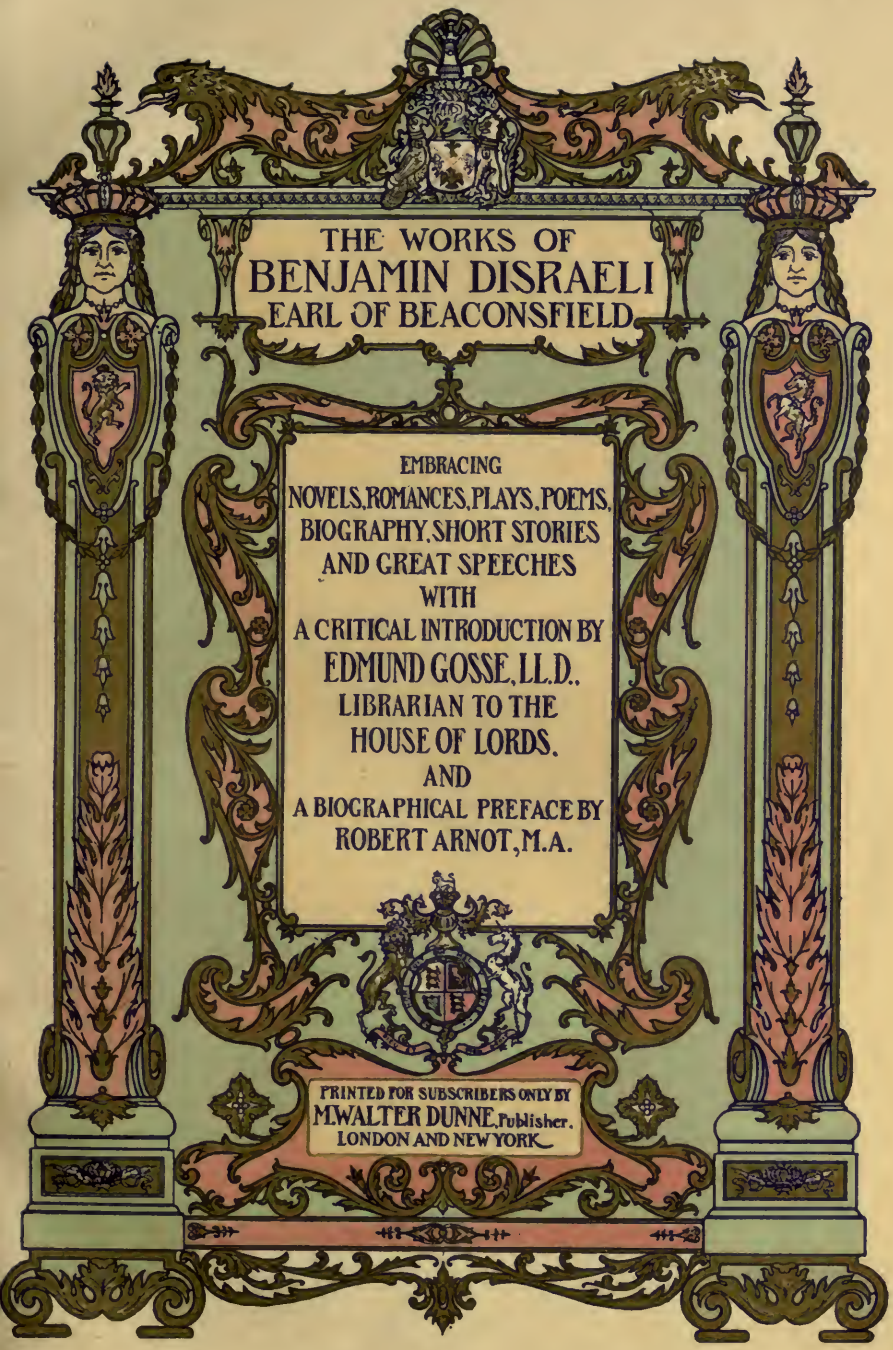
THE WORKS OF
BENJAMIN DISRAELI
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD
EMBRACING
NOVELS, ROMANCES, PLAYS, POEMS,
BIOGRAPHY, SHORT STORIES
AND GREAT SPEECHES
WITH
A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION BY
EDMUND GOSSE, LL.D.,
LIBRARIAN TO THE
HOUSE OF LORDS.
AND
A BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE BY
ROBERT ARNOT, M.A.
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ENDYMION

AFTER AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY GEORGE ALFRED WILLIAMS.

After a time duly appeared the Knight of the White Rose, whose armour shielded the princely form of Florestan.

(See page 372.)

M. WALTER DUNNE
NEW YORK and LONDON

ENDYMION

BY

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

VOLUME I.

M. WALTER DUNNE

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The Neuchatels	The Rothschilds
Zenobia	Lady Jersey
Berengaria (*Lady Montfort*)	The Hon. Mrs. Norton
Agrippina	Queen Hortense
Adriana Neuchatel	Lady Burdett-Coutts
Colonel Albert (*Prince Florestan*)	Napoleon III.
Lord Roehampton	Lord Palmerston
Lord Montfort	Lord Hertford
Lord Rawchester	Earl Granville
Earl of Beaumaris	Earl of Derby
Mr. Bertie Tremaine	Lord Houghton (Richard Monckton Milnes)
Count of Ferroll	Prince Bismarck
Endymion	The Author
Nigel Penruddock	Cardinal Wiseman
Mr. Ferrars (*the grandfather*)	Right Hon. George Rose
George Waldershare	George Smythe
Job Thornberry	Richard Cobden
Mr. Vigo	Mr. Poole
Mr. Jorrocks.	Mr. Milner Gibson
Hortensius	Sir W. Vernon Harcourt
Sidney Wilton	Sidney Herbert
Mr. St. Barbe	William Makepeace Thackeray
Mr. Gushy	Charles Dickens
Topsy-Turvy	*Vanity Fair*
Scaramouch	*Punch*

ENDYMION

CHAPTER I.

An Impending Political Crisis.

IT WAS a rich, warm night, at the beginning of August, when a gentleman enveloped in a cloak, for he was in evening dress, emerged from a club-house at the top of St. James' Street, and descended that celebrated eminence. He had not proceeded more than half way down the street when, encountering a friend, he stopped with some abruptness.

'I have been looking for you everywhere,' he said.

'What is it?'

'We can hardly talk about it here.'

'Shall we go to White's?'

'I have just left it, and, between ourselves, I would rather we should be more alone. 'Tis as warm as noon. Let us cross the street and get into St. James' Place. That is always my idea of solitude.'

So they crossed the street, and, at the corner of St. James' Place, met several gentlemen who had

just come out of Brooks's Club-house. These saluted the companions as they passed, and said, 'Capital account from Chiswick—Lord Howard says the chief will be in Downing Street on Monday.'

'It is of Chiswick that I am going to speak to you,' said the gentleman in the cloak, putting his arm in that of his companion as they walked on. 'What I am about to tell you is known only to three persons, and is the most sacred of secrets. Nothing but our friendship could authorise me to impart it to you.'

'I hope it is something to your advantage,' said his companion.

'Nothing of that sort; it is of yourself that I am thinking. Since our political estrangement, I have never had a contented moment. From Christ Church, until that unhappy paralytic stroke, which broke up a government that had lasted fifteen years, and might have continued fifteen more, we seemed always to have been working together. That we should again unite is my dearest wish. A crisis is at hand. I want you to use it to your advantage. Know, then, that what they were just saying about Chiswick is moonshine. His case is hopeless, and it has been communicated to the King.'

'Hopeless!'

'Rely upon it; it came direct from the Cottage to my friend.'

'I thought he had a mission?' said his companion, with emotion; 'and men with missions do not disappear till they have fulfilled them.'

'But why did you think so? How often have I asked you for your grounds for such a conviction! There are none. The man of the age is clearly the

Duke, the saviour of Europe, in the perfection of manhood, and with an iron constitution.'

'The salvation of Europe is the affair of a past generation,' said his companion. 'We want something else now. The salvation of England should be the subject rather of our present thoughts.'

'England! why when were things more sound? Except the split among our own men, which will be now cured, there is not a cause of disquietude.'

'I have much,' said his friend.

'You never used to have any, Sidney. What extraordinary revelations can have been made to you during three months of office under a semi-Whig Ministry?'

'Your taunt is fair, though it pains me. And I confess to you that when I resolved to follow Canning and join his new allies, I had many a twinge. I was bred in the Tory camp; the Tories put me in Parliament and gave me office; I lived with them and liked them; we dined and voted together, and together pasquinaded our opponents. And yet, after Castlereagh's death, to whom like yourself I was much attached, I had great misgivings as to the position of our party, and the future of the country. I tried to drive them from my mind, and at last took refuge in Canning, who seemed just the man appointed for an age of transition.'

'But a transition to what?'

'Well, his foreign policy was Liberal.'

'The same as the Duke's; the same as poor dear Castlereagh's. Nothing more unjust than the affected belief that there was any difference between them — a ruse of the Whigs to foster discord in our ranks. And as for domestic affairs, no one is stouter against Par-

liamentary Reform, while he is for the Church and no surrender, though he may make a harmless speech now and then, as many of us do, in favour of the Catholic claims.'

'Well, we will not now pursue this old controversy, my dear Ferrars, particularly if it be true, as you say, that Mr. Canning now lies upon his death-bed.'

'If! I tell you at this very moment it may be all over.'

'I am shaken to my very centre.'

'It is doubtless a great blow to you,' rejoined Mr. Ferrars, 'and I wish to alleviate it. That is why I was looking for you. The King will, of course, send for the Duke, but I can tell you there will be a disposition to draw back our friends that left us, at least the younger ones of promise. If you are awake, there is no reason why you should not retain your office.'

'I am not so sure the King will send for the Duke.'

'It is certain.'

'Well,' said his companion musingly, 'it may be fancy, but I cannot resist the feeling that this country, and the world generally, is on the eve of a great change—and I do not think the Duke is the man for the epoch.'

'I see no reason why there should be any great change; certainly not in this country,' said Mr. Ferrars. 'Here we have changed everything that was required. Peel has settled the criminal law, and Huskisson the currency, and though I am prepared myself still further to reduce the duties on foreign imports, no one can deny that on this subject the Government is in advance of public opinion.'

'The whole affair rests on too contracted a basis,' said his companion. 'We are habituated to its exclusiveness, and, no doubt, custom in England is a power; but let some event suddenly occur which makes a nation feel or think, and the whole thing might vanish like a dream.'

'What can happen? Such affairs as the Luddites do not occur twice in a century, and as for Spafields riots, they are impossible now with Peel's new police. The country is employed and prosperous, and were it not so, the landed interest would always keep things straight.'

'It is powerful, and has been powerful for a long time; but there are other interests besides the landed interest now.'

'Well, there is the colonial interest, and the shipping interest,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'and both of them thoroughly with us.'

'I was not thinking of them,' said his companion. 'It is the increase of population, and of a population not employed in the cultivation of the soil, and all the consequences of such circumstances that were passing over my mind.'

'Don't you be too *doctrinaire,* my dear Sidney; you and I are practical men. We must deal with the existing, the urgent; and there is nothing more pressing at this moment than the formation of a new government. What I want is to see you a member of it.'

'Ah!' said his companion with a sigh, 'do you really think it is so near as that?'

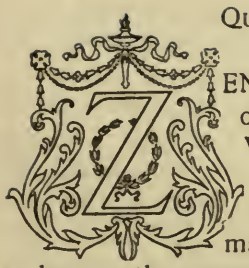
'Why, what have we been talking of all this time, my dear Sidney? Clear your head of all doubt, and, if possible, of all regrets; we must deal with facts, and we must deal with them to-morrow.'

'I still think he had a mission,' said Sidney with a sigh, 'if it were only to bring hope to a people.'

'Well, I do not see he could have done anything more,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'nor do I believe his government would have lasted during the session. However, I must now say good-night, for I must look in at the Square. Think well of what I have said, and let me hear from you as soon as you can.'

CHAPTER II.

Queen of Fashion.



ENOBIA was the queen of London, of fashion, and of the Tory party. When she was not holding high festivals, or attending them, she was always at home to her intimates, and as she deigned but rarely to honour the assemblies of others with her presence, she was generally at her evening post to receive the initiated. To be her invited guest under such circumstances proved at once that you had entered the highest circle of the social Paradise.

Zenobia was leaning back on a brilliant sofa, supported by many cushions, and a great personage, grey-headed and blue-ribboned, who was permitted to share the honours of the high place, was hanging on her animated and inspiring accents. An ambassador, in an armed chair which he had placed somewhat before her, while he listened with apparent devotion to the oracle, now and then interposed a remark, polished and occasionally cynical. More remote, some dames of high degree were surrounded by a chosen band of rank and fashion and celebrity; and now and then was heard a silver laugh, and now

and then was breathed a gentle sigh. Servants glided about the suite of summer chambers, occasionally with sherbets and ices, and sometimes a lady entered and saluted Zenobia, and then retreated to the general group, and sometimes a gentleman entered, and pressed the hand of Zenobia to his lips, and then vanished into air.

'What I want you to see,' said Zenobia, 'is that reaction is the law of life, and that we are on the eve of a great reaction. Since Lord Castlereagh's death we have had five years of revolution — nothing but change, and every change has been disastrous. Abroad we are in league with all the conspirators of the Continent, and if there were a general war we should not have an ally; at home our trade, I am told, is quite ruined, and we are deluged with foreign articles; while, thanks to Mr. Huskisson, the country banks, which enabled Mr. Pitt to carry on the war and saved England, are all broken. There was one thing of which I thought we should always be proud, and that was our laws and their administration; but now our most sacred enactments are questioned, and people are told to call out for the reform of our courts of judicature which used to be the glory of the land. This cannot last. I see, indeed, many signs of national disgust; people would have borne a great deal from poor Lord Liverpool — for they knew he was a good man, though I always thought a weak one; but when it was found that this boasted Liberalism only meant letting the Whigs into office — who, if they had always been in office, would have made us the slaves of Bonaparte — their eyes were opened. Depend upon it, the reaction has commenced.'

'We shall have some trouble with France,' said the ambassador, 'unless there is a change here.'

'The Church is weary of the present men,' said the great personage. 'No one really knows what they are after.'

'And how can the country be governed without the Church?' exclaimed Zenobia. 'If the country once thinks the Church is in danger, the affair will soon be finished. The King ought to be told what is going on.'

'Nothing is going on,' said the ambassador; 'but everybody is afraid of something.'

'The King's friends should impress upon him never to lose sight of the landed interest,' said the great personage.

'How can any government go on without the support of the Church and the land?' exclaimed Zenobia. 'It is quite unnatural.'

'That is the mystery,' remarked the ambassador. 'Here is a government, supported by none of the influences hitherto deemed indispensable, and yet it exists.'

'The newspapers support it,' said the great personage, 'and the Dissenters, who are trying to bring themselves into notice, and who are said to have some influence in the northern counties, and the Whigs, who are in a hole, are willing to seize the hand of the ministry to help them out of it; and then there is always a number of people who will support any government—and so the thing works.'

'They have got a new name for this hybrid sentiment,' said the ambassador. 'They call it public opinion.'

'How very absurd!' said Zenobia, 'a mere nick-

name. As if there could be any opinion but that of the Sovereign and the two Houses of Parliament.'

'They are trying to introduce here the continental Liberalism,' said the great personage. 'Now we know what Liberalism means on the Continent. It means the abolition of property and religion. Those ideas would not suit this country; and I often puzzle myself to foresee how they will attempt to apply Liberal opinions here.'

'I shall always think,' said Zenobia, 'that Lord Liverpool went much too far, though I never said so in his time; for I always uphold my friends.'

'Well, we shall see what Canning will do about the Test and Corporation Acts,' said the great personage. 'I understand they mean to push him.'

'By-the-bye, how is he really?' said the ambassador. 'What are the accounts this afternoon?'

'Here is a gentleman who will tell us,' said Zenobia, as Mr. Ferrars entered and saluted her.

'And what is your news from Chiswick?' she inquired.

'They say at Brooks's that he will be at Downing Street on Monday.'

'I doubt it,' said Zenobia, but with an expression of disappointment.

Zenobia invited Mr. Ferrars to join her immediate circle. The great personage and the ambassador were confidentially affable to one whom Zenobia so distinguished. Their conversation was in hushed tones, as become the initiated. Even Zenobia seemed subdued, and listened; and to listen, among her many talents, was perhaps her rarest. Mr. Ferrars was one of her favourites, and Zenobia liked young men who she thought would become ministers of State.

An Hungarian Princess who had quitted the opera early that she might look in at Zenobia, was now announced. The arrival of this great lady made a stir. Zenobia embraced her, and the great personage with affectionate homage yielded to her instantly the place of honour, and then soon retreated to the laughing voices in the distance that had already more than once attracted and charmed his ear.

'Mind; I see you to-morrow,' said Zenobia to Mr. Ferrars as he also withdrew. 'I shall have something to tell you.'

CHAPTER III.

Endymion.

THE father of Mr. Ferrars had the reputation of being the son of a once somewhat celebrated statesman, but the only patrimony he inherited from his presumed parent was a clerkship in the Treasury, where he found himself drudging at an early age. Nature had endowed him with considerable abilities, and peculiarly adapted to the scene of their display. It was difficult to decide which was most remarkable, his shrewdness or his capacity of labour. His quickness of perception and mastery of details made him in a few years an authority in the office, and a Secretary of the Treasury, who was quite ignorant of details, but who was a good judge of human character, had the sense to appoint Ferrars his private secretary.

This happy preferment in due time opened the whole official world to one not only singularly qualified for that kind of life, but who possessed the peculiar gifts that were then commencing to be much in demand in those circles. We were then entering that era of commercial and financial reform which had

been, if not absolutely occasioned, certainly precipitated, by the revolt of our colonies. Knowledge of finance and acquaintance with tariffs were then rare gifts, and before five years of his private secretaryship had expired, Ferrars was mentioned to Mr. Pitt as the man at the Treasury who could do something that the great minister required. This decided his lot. Mr. Pitt found in Ferrars the instrument he wanted, and appreciating all his qualities placed him in a position which afforded them full play. The minister returned Ferrars to Parliament, for the Treasury then had boroughs of its own, and the new member was preferred to an important and laborious post.

While Pitt and Grenville were in the ascendant, Mr. Ferrars toiled and flourished. He was exactly the man they liked; unwearied, vigilant, clear and cold; with a dash of natural sarcasm developed by a sharp and varied experience. He disappeared from the active world in the latter years of the Liverpool reign, when a newer generation and more bustling ideas successfully asserted their claims; but he retired with the solace of a sinecure, a pension, and a privy-councillorship. The Cabinet he had never entered, nor dared to hope to enter. It was the privilege of an inner circle even in our then contracted public life. It was the dream of Ferrars to revenge in this respect his fate in the person of his son, and only child. He was resolved that his offspring should enjoy all those advantages of education and breeding and society of which he himself had been deprived. For him was to be reserved a full initiation in those costly ceremonies which, under the names of Eton and Christ-Church, in his time fascinated and dazzled mankind.

His son, William Pitt Ferrars, realised more than his father's hopes. Extremely good-looking, he was gifted with a precocity of talent. He was the marvel of Eton and the hope of Oxford. As a boy, his Latin verses threw enraptured tutors into paroxysms of praise, while debating societies hailed with acclamation clearly another heaven-born minister. He went up to Oxford about the time that the examinations were reformed and rendered really efficient. This only increased his renown, for the name of Ferrars figured among the earliest double-firsts. Those were days when a crack university reputation often opened the doors of the House of Commons to a young aspirant; at least, after a season. But Ferrars had not to wait. His father, who watched his career with the passionate interest with which a Newmarket man watches the development of some gifted yearling, took care that all the odds should be in his favour in the race of life. An old colleague of the elder Mr. Ferrars, a worthy peer with many boroughs, placed a seat at the disposal of the youthful hero, the moment he was prepared to accept it, and he might be said to have left the University only to enter the House of Commons.

There, if his career had not yet realised the dreams of his youthful admirers, it had at least been one of progress and unbroken prosperity. His first speech was successful, though florid, but it was on foreign affairs, which permit rhetoric, and in those days demanded at least one Virgilian quotation. In this latter branch of oratorical adornment Ferrars was never deficient. No young man of that time, and scarcely any old one, ventured to address Mr. Speaker without being equipped with a Latin passage. Ferrars, in this respect, was triply armed. Indeed, when he entered

public life full of hope and promise, though disciplined to a certain extent by his mathematical training, he had read very little more than some Latin writers, some Greek plays, and some treatises of Aristotle. These with a due course of Bampton Lectures and some dipping into the *Quarterly Review,* then in its prime, qualified a man in those days, not only for being a member of Parliament, but becoming a candidate for the responsibility of statesmanship. Ferrars made his way; for two years he was occasionally asked by the Minister to speak, and then Lord Castlereagh, who liked young men, make him a Lord of the Treasury. He was Under-Secretary of State, and 'very rising,' when the death of Lord Liverpool brought about the severance of the Tory party, and Mr. Ferrars, mainly under the advice of Zenobia, resigned his office when Mr. Canning was appointed Minister, and cast in his lot with the great destiny of the Duke of Wellington.

The elder Ferrars had the reputation of being wealthy. It was supposed that he had enjoyed opportunities of making money, and had availed himself of them, but this was not true. Though a cynic, and with little respect for his fellow-creatures, Ferrars had a pride in official purity, and when the Government was charged with venality and corruption, he would observe, with a dry chuckle, that he had seen a great deal of life, and that for his part he would not much trust any man out of Downing Street. He had been unable to resist the temptation of connecting his life with that of an individual of birth and rank; and in a weak moment, perhaps his only one, he had given his son a stepmother in a still good-looking and very expensive Viscountess-Dowager.

Mr. Ferrars was anxious that his son should make a great alliance, but he was so distracted between prudential considerations and his desire that in the veins of his grand-children there should flow blood of undoubted nobility, that he could never bring to his purpose that clear and concentrated will which was one of the causes of his success in life; and, in the midst of his perplexities, his son unexpectedly settled the question himself. Though naturally cold and calculating, William Ferrars, like most of us, had a vein of romance in his being, and it asserted itself. There was a Miss Carey, who suddenly became the beauty of the season. She was an orphan, and reputed to be no inconsiderable heiress, and was introduced to the world by an aunt who was a duchess, and who meant that her niece should be the same. Everybody talked about them, and they went everywhere — among other places to the House of Commons, where Miss Carey, spying the senators from the old ventilator in the ceiling of St. Stephen's Chapel, dropped in her excitement her opera-glass, which fell at the feet of Mr. Under-Secretary Ferrars. He hastened to restore it to its beautiful owner, whom he found accompanied by several of his friends, and he was not only thanked, but invited to remain with them; and the next day he called, and he called very often afterwards, and many other things happened, and at the end of July the beauty of the season was married not to a duke, but to a rising man, who Zenobia, who at first disapproved of the match — for Zenobia never liked her male friends to marry — was sure would one day be Prime Minister of England.

Mrs. Ferrars was of the same opinion as Zenobia, for she was ambitious, and the dream was captiva-

ting. And Mrs. Ferrars soon gained Zenobia's good graces, for she had many charms, and, though haughty to the multitude, was a firstrate flatterer. Zenobia liked flattery, and always said she did. Mr. Under-Secretary Ferrars took a mansion in Hill Street, and furnished it with befitting splendour. His dinners were celebrated, and Mrs. Ferrars gave suppers after the opera. The equipages of Mrs. Ferrars were distinguished, and they had a large retinue of servants. They had only two children, and they were twins, a brother and a sister, who were brought up like the children of princes. Partly for them, and partly because a minister should have a Tusculum, the Ferrars soon engaged a magnificent villa at Wimbledon, which had the advantage of admirable stables, convenient, as Mrs. Ferrars was fond of horses, and liked the children too, with their fancy ponies, to be early accustomed to riding. All this occasioned expenditure, but old Mr. Ferrars made his son a liberal allowance, and young Mrs. Ferrars was an heiress, or the world thought so, which is nearly the same, and then too, young Mr. Ferrars was a rising man, in office, and who would always be in office for the rest of his life; at least, Zenobia said so, because he was on the right side and the Whigs were nowhere, and never would be anywhere, which was quite right, as they had wished to make us the slaves of Bonaparte.

When the King, after much hesitation, sent for Mr. Canning, on the resignation of Lord Liverpool, the Zenobian theory seemed a little at fault, and William Ferrars absolutely out of office had more than one misgiving; but after some months of doubt and anxiety, it seemed after all the great lady was right. The unexpected disappearance of Mr. Canning

from the scene, followed by the transient and embarrassed phantom of Lord Goderich, seemed to indicate an inexorable destiny that England should be ruled by the most eminent man of the age, and the most illustrious of her citizens. William Ferrars, under the inspiration of Zenobia, had thrown in his fortunes with the Duke, and after nine months of disquietude found his due reward. In the January that succeeded the August conversation in St. James' Street with Sidney Wilton, William Ferrars was sworn of the Privy Council, and held high office, on the verge of the Cabinet.

Mr. Ferrars had a dinner party in Hill Street on the day he had returned from Windsor with the seals of his new office. The catastrophe of the Goderich Cabinet, almost on the eve of the meeting of Parliament, had been so sudden, that, not anticipating such a state of affairs, Ferrars, among his other guests, had invited Sidney Wilton. He was rather regretting this when, as his carriage stopped at his own door, he observed that very gentleman on his threshold.

Wilton greeted him warmly, and congratulated him on his promotion. 'I do so at once,' he added, 'because I shall not have the opportunity this evening. I was calling here in the hope of seeing Mrs. Ferrars, and asking her to excuse me from being your guest to-day.'

'Well, it is rather awkward,' said Ferrars, 'but I could have no idea of this when you were so kind as to say you would come.'

'Oh, nothing of that sort,' said Sidney. 'I am out and you are in, and I hope you may be in for a long, long time. I dare say it may be so, and the

Duke is the man of the age, as you always said he was. I hope your being in office is not to deprive me of your pleasant dinners; it would be too bad to lose my place both at Whitehall and in Hill Street.'

'I trust that will never happen, my dear fellow; but to-day I thought it might be embarrassing.'

'Not at all; I could endure without wincing even the triumphant glance of Zenobia. The fact is, I have some business of the most pressing nature which has suddenly arisen, and which demands my immediate attention.'

Ferrars expressed his regret, though in fact he was greatly relieved, and they parted.

Zenobia did dine with the William Ferrars to-day, and her handsome husband came with her, a knight of the garter, and just appointed to a high office in the household by the new government. Even the excitement of the hour did not disturb his indigenous repose. It was a dignified serenity, quite natural, and quite compatible with easy and even cordial manners, and an address always considerate even when not sympathetic. He was not a loud or a long talker, but his terse remarks were full of taste and a just appreciation of things. If they were sometimes trenchant, the blade was of fine temper. Old Mr. Ferrars was there and the Viscountess Edgware. His hair had become quite silvered, and his cheek rosy as a December apple. His hazel eyes twinkled with satisfaction as he remembered the family had now produced two privy councillors. Lord Pomeroy was there, the great lord who had returned William Ferrars to Parliament, a little man, quiet, shy, rather insignificant in appearance, but who observed everybody and everything; a conscientious man, who was

always doing good, in silence and secrecy, and, denounced as a boroughmonger, had never sold a seat in his life, and was always looking out for able men of character to introduce them to public affairs. It was not a formal party, but had grown up in great degree out of the circumstances of the moment. There were more men than women, and all men in office or devoted supporters of the new ministry.

Mrs. Ferrars, without being a regular beauty, had a voluptuous face and form. Her complexion was brilliant, with large and long-lashed eyes of blue. Her mouth was certainly too large, but the pouting richness of her lips and the splendour of her teeth baffled criticism. She was a woman who was always gorgeously or fantastically attired.

'I never can understand,' would sometimes observe Zenobia's husband to his brilliant spouse, 'how affairs are carried on in this world. Now we have, my dear, fifty thousand per annum; and I do not see how Ferrars can have much more than five; and yet he lives much as we do, perhaps better. I know Gibson showed me a horse last week that I very much wanted, but I would not give him two hundred guineas for it. I called there to-day to look after it again, for it would have suited me exactly, but I was told I was too late, and it was sold to Mrs. Ferrars.'

'My dear, you know I do not understand money matters,' Zenobia said in reply. 'I never could; but you should remember that old Ferrars must be very rich, and that William Ferrars is the most rising man of the day, and is sure to be in the Cabinet before he is forty.'

Everybody had an appetite for dinner to-day, and

the dinner was worthy of the appetites. Zenobia's husband declared to himself that he never dined so well, though he gave his *chef* £500 a year, and old Lord Pomeroy, who had not yet admitted French wines to his own table, seemed quite abashed with the number of his wine-glasses and their various colours, and as he tasted one succulent dish after another, felt a proud satisfaction in having introduced to public life so distinguished a man as William Ferrars.

With the dessert, not without some ceremony, were introduced the two most remarkable guests of the entertainment, and these were the twins; children of singular beauty, and dressed, if possible, more fancifully and brilliantly than their mamma. They resembled each other, and had the same brilliant complexions, rich chestnut hair, delicately arched brows, and dark blue eyes. Though only eight years of age, a most unchildlike self-possession distinguished them. The expression of their countenances was haughty, disdainful, and supercilious. Their beautiful features seemed quite unimpassioned, and they moved as if they expected everything to yield to them. The girl, whose long ringlets were braided with pearls, was ushered to a seat next to her father, and, like her brother, who was placed by Mrs. Ferrars, was soon engaged in negligently tasting delicacies, while she seemed apparently unconscious of any one being present, except when she replied to those who addressed her with a stare and a haughty monosyllable. The boy, in a black velvet jacket with large Spanish buttons of silver filigree, a shirt of lace, and a waistcoat of white satin, replied with reserve, but some condescension, to the good-natured but half-humorous inquiries of the husband of Zenobia.

'And when do you go to school?' asked his lordship in a kind voice and with a laughing eye.

'I shall go to Eton in two years,' replied the child without the slightest emotion, and not withdrawing his attention from the grapes he was tasting, or even looking at his inquirer, 'and then I shall go to Christ Church, and then I shall go into Parliament.'

'Myra,' said an intimate of the family, a handsome private secretary of Mr. Ferrars, to the daughter of the house, as he supplied her plate with some choicest delicacies, 'I hope you have not forgotten your engagement to me which you made at Wimbledon two years ago?'

'What engagement?' she haughtily inquired.

'To marry me.'

'I should not think of marrying any one who was not in the House of Lords,' she replied, and she shot at him a glance of contempt.

The ladies rose. As they were ascending the stairs, one of them said to Mrs. Ferrars, 'Your son's name is very pretty, but it is very uncommon, is it not?'

''Tis a family name. The first Carey who bore it was a courtier of Charles the First, and we have never since been without it. William wanted our boy to be christened Pomeroy, but I was always resolved, if I ever had a son, that he should be named Endymion.'

CHAPTER IV.

A Queen without a Throne.

ABOUT the time that the ladies rose from the dinner-table in Hill Street, Mr. Sidney Wilton entered the hall of the Clarendon Hotel, and murmured an inquiry of the porter. Whereupon a bell was rung, and soon a foreign servant appeared, and bowing, invited Mr. Wilton to ascend the staircase and follow him. Mr. Wilton was ushered through an ante-chamber into a room of some importance, lofty and decorated, and obviously adapted for distinguished guests. On a principal table a desk was open and many papers strewn about. Apparently some person had only recently been writing there. There were in the room several musical instruments; the piano was open, there was a harp and a guitar. The room was rather dimly lighted, but cheerful from the steady blaze of the fire, before which Mr. Wilton stood, not long alone, for an opposite door opened, and a lady advanced leading with her left hand a youth of interesting mien, and about twelve years of age. The lady was fair and singularly thin. It seemed that her delicate hand must really be transparent. Her cheek was

sunk, but the expression of her large brown eyes was inexpressibly pleasing. She wore her own hair, once the most celebrated in Europe, and still uncovered. Though the prodigal richness of the tresses had disappeared, the arrangement was still striking from its grace. That rare quality pervaded the being of this lady, and it was impossible not to be struck with her carriage as she advanced to greet her guest; free from all affectation and yet full of movement and gestures which might have been the study of painters.

'Ah!' she exclaimed as she gave him her hand, which he pressed to his lips, 'you are ever faithful.'

Seating themselves, she continued, 'You have not seen my boy since he sat upon your knee. Florestan, salute Mr. Wilton, your mother's most cherished friend.'

'This is a sudden arrival,' said Mr. Wilton.

'Well, they would not let us rest,' said the lady. 'Our only refuge was Switzerland, but I cannot breathe among the mountains, and so, after a while, we stole to an obscure corner of the south, and for a time we were tranquil. But soon the old story: representations, remonstrances, warnings, and threats, appeals to Vienna, and lectures from Prince Metternich, not the less impressive because they were courteous, and even gallant.'

'And had nothing occurred to give a colour to such complaints? Or was it sheer persecution?'

'Well, you know,' replied the lady, 'we wished to remain quiet and obscure; but where the lad is, they will find him out. It often astonishes me. I believe if we were in the centre of a forest in some Indian isle, with no companions but monkeys and

elephants, a secret agent would appear — some devoted victim of our family, prepared to restore our fortunes and renovate his own. I speak the truth to you always I have never countenanced these people; I have never encouraged them; but it is impossible rudely to reject the sympathy of those who, after all, are your fellow-sufferers, and some of whom have given proof of even disinterested devotion. For my own part, I have never faltered in my faith that Florestan would some day sit on the throne of his father, dark as appears to be our life; but I have never much believed that the great result could be occasioned or precipitated by intrigues, but rather by events more powerful than man, and led on by that fatality in which his father believed.'

'And now you think of remaining here?' said Mr. Wilton.

'No,' said the lady; 'that I cannot do. I love everything in this country except its climate and, perhaps, its hotels. I think of trying the south of Spain, and fancy, if quite alone, I might vegetate there unnoticed. I cannot bring myself altogether to quit Europe. I am, my dear Sidney, intensely European. But Spain is not exactly the country I should fix upon to form kings and statesmen. And this is the point upon which I wish to consult you. I want Florestan to receive an English education, and I want you to put me in the way of accomplishing this. It might be convenient, under such circumstances, that he should not obtrude his birth — perhaps, that it should be concealed. He has many honourable names besides the one which indicates the state to which he was born. But, on all these points, we want your advice.' And she seemed to

appeal to her son, who bowed his head with a slight smile, but did not speak.

Mr. Wilton expressed his deep interest in her wishes, and promised to consider how they might best be accomplished, and then the conversation took a more general tone.

'This change of government in your country,' said the lady, 'so unexpected, so utterly unforeseen, disturbs me; in fact, it decided my hesitating movements. I cannot but believe that the accession of the Duke of Wellington to power must be bad, at least, for us. It is essentially reactionary. They are triumphing at Vienna.'

'Have they cause?' said Mr. Wilton. 'I am an impartial witness, for I have no post in the new administration; but the leading colleagues of Mr. Canning form part of it, and the conduct of foreign affairs remains in the same hands.'

'That is consoling,' said the lady. 'I wonder if Lord Dudley would see me. Perhaps not. Ministers do not love pretenders. I knew him when I was not a pretender,' added the lady, with the sweetest of smiles, 'and thought him agreeable. He was witty. Ah! Sidney, those were happy days. I look back to the past with regret, but without remorse. One might have done more good, but one did some;' and she sighed.

'You seemed to me,' said Sidney with emotion, 'to diffuse benefits and blessings among all around you.'

'And I read,' said the lady, a little indignant, 'in some memoirs the other day, that our court was a corrupt and dissolute court. It was a court of pleasure, if you like; but of pleasure that animated and

refined, and put the world in good humour, which, after all, is good government. The most corrupt and dissolute courts on the continent of Europe that I have known,' said the lady, 'have been outwardly the dullest and most decorous.'

'My memory of those days,' said Mr. Wilton, 'is of ceaseless grace and inexhaustible charm.'

'Well,' said the lady, 'if I sinned I have at least suffered. And I hope they were only sins of omission. I wanted to see everybody happy, and tried to make them so. But let us talk no more of ourselves. The unfortunate are always egotistical. Tell me something of Mr. Wilton; and, above all, tell me why you are not in the new government.'

'I have not been invited,' said Mr. Wilton. 'There are more claimants than can be satisfied, and my claims are not very strong. It is scarcely a disappointment to me. I shall continue in public life; but, so far as political responsibility is concerned, I would rather wait. I have some fancies on that head, but I will not trouble you with them. My time, therefore, is at my command; and so,' he added smilingly, 'I can attend to the education of Prince Florestan.'

'Do you hear that, Florestan?' said the lady to her son; 'I told you we had a friend. Thank Mr. Wilton.'

And the young Prince bowed as before, but with a more serious expression. He, however, said nothing.

'I see you have not forgotten your most delightful pursuit,' said Mr. Wilton, and he looked towards the musical instruments.

'No,' said the lady; 'throned or discrowned, music has ever been the charm or consolation of my life.'

'Pleasure should follow business,' said Mr. Wilton, 'and we have transacted ours. Would it be too bold if I asked again to hear those tones which have so often enchanted me?'

'My voice has not fallen off,' said the lady, 'for you know it was never firstrate. But they were kind enough to say it had some expression, probably because I generally sang my own words to my own music. I will sing you my farewell to Florestan,' she added gaily, and she took up her guitar, and then in tones of melancholy sweetness, breaking at last into a gushing burst of long-controlled affection, she expressed the agony and devotion of a mother's heart. Mr. Wilton was a little agitated; her son left the room. The mother turned round with a smiling face, and said, 'The darling cannot bear to hear it, but I sing it on purpose, to prepare him for the inevitable.'

'He is soft-hearted,' said Mr. Wilton.

'He is the most affectionate of beings,' replied the mother. 'Affectionate and mysterious. I can say no more. I ought to tell you his character. I cannot. You may say he may have none. I do not know. He has abilities, for he acquires knowledge with facility, and knows a great deal for a boy. But he never gives an opinion. He is silent and solitary. Poor darling! he has rarely had companions, and that may be the cause. He seems to me always to be thinking.'

'Well, a public school will rouse him from his reveries,' said Mr. Wilton.

'As he is away at this moment, I will say that which I should not care to say before his face,' said the lady. 'You are about to do me a great service,

not the first; and before I leave this, we may—we must—meet again more than once, but there is no time like the present. The separation between Florestan and myself may be final. It is sad to think of such things, but they must be thought of, for they are probable. I still look in a mirror, Sidney; I am not so frightened by what has occurred since we first met, to be afraid of that—but I never deceive myself. I do not know what may be the magical effect of the raisins of Malaga, but if it save my life the grape cure will indeed achieve a miracle. Do not look gloomy. Those who have known real grief seldom seem sad. I have been struggling with sorrow for ten years, but I have got through it with music and singing, and my boy. See now—he will be a source of expense, and it will not do for you to be looking to a woman for supplies. Women are generous, but not precise in money matters. I have some excuse, for the world has treated me not very well. I never got my pension regularly; now I never get it at all. So much for the treaties, but everybody laughs at them. Here is the fortune of Florestan, and I wish it all to be spent on his education,' and she took a case from her bosom. 'They are not the crown jewels, though. The memoirs I was reading the other day say I ran away with them. That is false, like most things said of me. But these are gems of Golconda, which I wish you to realise and expend for his service. They were the gift of love, and they were worn in love.'

'It is unnecessary,' said Mr. Wilton, deprecating the offer by his attitude.

'Hush!' said the lady. 'I am still a sovereign to you, and I must be obeyed.'

Mr. Wilton took the case of jewels, pressed it to his lips, and then placed it in the breast pocket of his coat. He was about to retire, when the lady added, 'I must give you this copy of my song.'

'And you will write my name on it?'

'Certainly,' replied the lady, as she went to the table and wrote, 'For Mr. Sidney Wilton, from Agrippina.'

CHAPTER V.

Zenobia's News.

N THE meantime, power and prosperity clustered round the roof and family of Ferrars. He himself was in the prime of manhood, with an exalted position in the world of politics, and with a prospect of the highest. The Government of which he was a member was not only deemed strong, but eternal. The favour of the Court and the confidence of the country were alike lavished on it. The government of the Duke could only be measured by his life, and his influence was irresistible. It was a dictatorship of patriotism. The country, long accustomed to a strong and undisturbed administration, and frightened by the changes and catastrophes which had followed the retirement of Lord Liverpool, took refuge in the powerful will and splendid reputation of a real hero.

Mrs. Ferrars was as ambitious of social distinction as her husband was of political power. She was a woman of taste, but of luxurious taste. She had a passion for splendour, which, though ever regulated by a fine perception of the fitness of things, was still costly. Though her mien was in general haughty,

she flattered Zenobia, and consummately. Zenobia, who liked handsome people, even handsome women, and persons who were dressed beautifully and delighted her eye by their grace and fine manners, was quite won by Mrs. Ferrars, against whom at first she was inclined to be a little prejudiced. There was an entire alliance between them, and though Mrs. Ferrars greatly influenced and almost ruled Zenobia, the wife of the Minister was careful always to acknowledge the Queen of Fashion as her suzeraldin.

The great world then, compared with the huge society of the present period, was limited in its proportions, and composed of elements more refined though far less various. It consisted mainly of the great landed aristocracy, who had quite absorbed the nabobs of India, and had nearly appropriated the huge West Indian fortunes. Occasionally an eminent banker or merchant invested a large portion of his accumulations in land, and in the purchase of parliamentary influence, and was in time duly admitted into the sanctuary. But those vast and successful invasions of society by new classes which have since occurred, though impending, had not yet commenced. The manufacturers, the railway kings, the colossal contractors, the discoverers of nuggets, had not yet found their place in society and the senate. There were then, perhaps, more great houses open than at the present day, but there were very few little ones. The necessity of providing regular occasions for the assembling of the miscellaneous world of fashion led to the institution of Almack's, which died out in the advent of the new system of society, and in the fierce competition of its inexhaustible private entertainments.

The season then was brilliant and sustained, but it was not flurried. People did not go to various parties on the same night. They remained where they were assembled, and, not being in a hurry, were more agreeable than they are at the present day. Conversation was more cultivated; manners, though unconstrained, were more stately; and the world, being limited, knew itself much better. On the other hand, the sympathies of society were more contracted than they are at present. The pressure of population had not opened the heart of man. The world attended to its poor in its country parishes, and subscribed and danced for the Spitalfields weavers when their normal distress had overflowed, but their knowledge of the people did not exceed these bounds, and the people knew very little more about themselves. They were only half born.

The darkest hour precedes the dawn, and a period of unusual stillness often, perhaps usually, heralds the social convulsion. At this moment the general tranquillity and even content were remarkable. In politics the Whigs were quite prepared to extend to the Duke the same provisional confidence that had been accepted by Mr. Canning, and conciliation began to be an accepted phrase, which meant in practice some share on their part of the good things of the State. The country itself required nothing. There was a general impression, indeed, that they had been advancing at a rather rapid rate, and that it was as well that the reins should be entrusted to a wary driver. Zenobia, who represented society, was enraptured that the career of revolution had been stayed. She still mourned over the concession of the Manchester and Liverpool Railway in a moment of Liberal

infatuation, but flattered herself that any extension of the railway system might certainly be arrested, and on this head the majority of society, perhaps even of the country, was certainly on her side.

'I have some good news for you,' said one of her young favourites as he attended her reception. 'We have prevented this morning the lighting of Grosvenor Square by gas by a large majority.'

'I felt confident that disgrace would never occur,' said Zenobia, triumphant. 'And by a large majority! I wonder how Lord Pomeroy voted.'

'Against us.'

'How can one save this country?' exclaimed Zenobia. 'I believe now the story that he has ordered Lady Pomeroy not to go to the Drawing-room in a sedan chair.'

One bright May morning in the spring that followed the formation of the government that was to last for ever, Mrs. Ferrars received the world at a fanciful entertainment in the beautiful grounds of her Wimbledon villa. The day was genial, the scene was flushed with roses and pink thorns, and brilliant groups, amid bursts of music, clustered and sauntered on the green turf of bowery lawns. Mrs. Ferrars, on a rustic throne, with the wondrous twins in still more wonderful attire, distributed alternate observations of sympathetic gaiety to a Russian Grand Duke and to the serene heir of a German principality. And yet there was really an expression on her countenance of restlessness, not to say anxiety, which ill accorded with the dulcet tones and the wreathed smiles which charmed her august companions. Zenobia, the great Zenobia, had not arrived, and time was flying.

The Grand Duke played with the beautiful and

haughty infants, and the German Prince inquired of Endymion whether he were destined to be one of His Majesty's guards; but still Zenobia did not come, and Mrs. Ferrars could scarcely conceal her vexation. But there was no real occasion for it. For even at this moment, with avant-courier and outriders and badged postilions on her four horses of race, the lodge-gates were opening for the reception of the great lady, who herself soon appeared in the distance; and Mrs. Ferrars, accompanied by her distinguished guests, immediately rose and advanced to receive the Queen of Fashion. No one appreciated a royal presence more highly than Zenobia. It was her habit to impress upon her noble fellows of both sexes that there were relations of intimacy between herself and the royal houses of Europe, which were not shared by her class. She liked to play the part of a social mediator between the aristocracy and royal houses. A German Serenity was her delight, but a Russian Grand Duke was her embodiment of power and pomp, and sound principles in their most authentic and orthodox form. And yet though she addressed their highnesses with her usual courtly vivacity, and poured forth inquiries which seemed to indicate the most familiar acquaintance with the latest incidents from Schönbrunn or the Rhine, though she embraced her hostess, and even kissed the children, the practised eye of Mrs. Ferrars, whose life was a study of Zenobia, detected that her late appearance had been occasioned by an important cause, and, what was more, that Zenobia was anxious to communicate it to her. With feminine tact Mrs. Ferrars moved on with her guests until the occasion offered when she could present some great ladies to the princes; and then, dismissing the children on appropriate

missions, she was not surprised when Zenobia immediately exclaimed: 'Thank heaven, we are at last alone! You must have been surprised I was so late. Well, guess what has happened?' and then as Mrs. Ferrars shook her head, she continued: 'They are all four out!'

'All four!'

'Yes; Lord Dudley, Lord Palmerston, and Charles Grant follow Huskisson. I do not believe the first ever meant to go, but the Duke would not listen to his hypocritical explanations, and the rest have followed. I am surprised about Lord Dudley, as I know he loved his office.'

'I am alarmed,' said Mrs. Ferrars.

'Not the slightest cause for fear,' exclaimed the intrepid Zenobia. 'It must have happened sooner or later. I am delighted at it. We shall now have a cabinet of our own. They never would have rested till they had brought in some Whigs and the country hates the Whigs. No wonder, when we remember that if they had had their way we should have been wearing sabots at this time, with a French prefect probably in Holland House.'

'And whom will they put in the cabinet?' inquired Mrs. Ferrars.

'Our good friends, I hope,' said Zenobia, with an inspiring smile; 'but I have heard nothing about that yet. I am a little sorry about Lord Dudley, as I think they have drawn him into their mesh; but as for the other three, especially Huskisson and Lord Palmerston, I can tell you the Duke has never had a quiet moment since they joined him. We shall now begin to reign. The only mistake was ever to have admitted them. I think now we have got rid of Liberalism for ever.'

CHAPTER VI.

The Beginning of Revolution.

MR. FERRARS did not become a cabinet minister, but this was a vexation rather than a disappointment, and transient. The unexpected vacancies were filled by unexpected personages. So great a change in the frame of the ministry, without any promotion for himself, was on the first impression not agreeable, but reflection and the sanguine wisdom of Zenobia soon convinced him that all was for the best, that the thought of such rapid preferment was unreasonable, and that time and the due season must inevitably bring all that he could desire, especially as any term to the duration of the ministry was not now to be foreseen: scarcely indeed possible. In short, it was shown to him that the Tory party, renovated and restored, had entered upon a new lease of authority, which would stamp its character on the remainder of the nineteenth century, as Mr. Pitt and his school had marked its earlier and memorable years.

And yet this very reconstruction of the government necessarily led to an incident which, in its consequences, changed the whole character of English

politics, and commenced a series of revolutions which has not yet closed.

One of the new ministers who had been preferred to a place which Mr. Ferrars might have filled was an Irish gentleman, and a member for one of the most considerable counties in his country. He was a good speaker, and the government was deficient in debating power in the House of Commons; he was popular and influential.

The return of a cabinet minister by a large constituency was more appreciated in the days of close boroughs than at present. There was a rumour that the new minister was to be opposed, but Zenobia laughed the rumour to scorn. As she irresistibly remarked at one of her evening gatherings, 'Every landowner in the county is in his favour; therefore it is impossible.' The statistics of Zenobia were quite correct, yet the result was different from what she anticipated. An Irish lawyer, a professional agitator, himself a Roman Catholic and therefore ineligible, announced himself as a candidate in opposition to the new minister, and on the day of election, thirty thousand peasants, setting at defiance all the landowners of the county, returned O'Connell at the head of the poll, and placed among not the least memorable of historical events—the Clare election.

This event did not, however, occur until the end of the year 1828, for the state of the law then prevented the writ from being moved until that time, and during the whole of that year the Ferrars family had pursued a course of unflagging display. Courage, expenditure, and tact combined, had realised almost the height of that social ambition to which Mrs. Ferrars soared. Even in the limited and exclusive circle

which then prevailed, she began to be counted among the great dames. As for the twins, they seemed quite worthy of their beautiful and luxurious mother. Proud, wilful, and selfish, they had one redeeming quality, an intense affection for each other. The sister seemed to have the commanding spirit, for Endymion was calm, but if he were ruled by his sister, she was ever willing to be his slave, and to sacrifice every consideration to his caprice and his convenience.

The year 1829 was eventful, but to Ferrars more agitating than anxious. When it was first known that the head of the cabinet, whose colleague had been defeated at Clare, was himself about to propose the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, there was a thrill throughout the country: but after a time the success of the operation was not doubted, and was anticipated as a fresh proof of the irresistible fortune of the heroic statesman. There was some popular discontent in the country at the proposal, but it was mainly organised and stimulated by the Dissenters, and that section of Churchmen who most resembled them. The High Church party, the descendants of the old connection which had rallied round Sacheverell, had subsided into formalism, and shrank from any very active co-operation with their evangelical brethren.

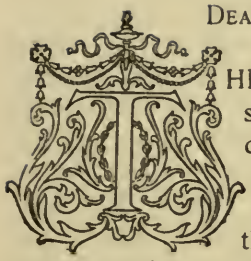
The English Church had no competent leaders among the clergy. The spirit that has animated and disturbed our latter times seemed quite dead, and no one anticipated its resurrection. The bishops had been selected from college dons, men profoundly ignorant of the condition and the wants of the country. To have edited a Greek play with second-rate success, or to have been the tutor of some considerable patrician, was the qualification then deemed desirable

and sufficient for an office, which at this day is at least reserved for eloquence and energy. The social influence of the episcopal bench was nothing. A prelate was rarely seen in the saloons of Zenobia. It is since the depths of religious thought have been probed, and the influence of woman in the spread and sustenance of religious feeling has again been recognised, that fascinating and fashionable prelates have become favoured guests in the refined saloons of the mighty, and, while apparently indulging in the vanities of the hour, have re-established the influence which in old days guided a Matilda or the mother of Constantine.

The end of the year 1829, however, brought a private event of moment to the Ferrars family. The elder Mr. Ferrars died. The world observed at the time how deeply affected his son was at this event. The relations between father and son had always been commendable, but the world was hardly prepared for Mr. Ferrars, junior, being so entirely overwhelmed. It would seem that nothing but the duties of public life could have restored him to his friends, and even these duties he relinquished for an unusual time. The world was curious to know the amount of his inheritance, but the proof of the will was unusually delayed, and public events soon occurred which alike consigned the will and the will-maker to oblivion.

CHAPTER VII.

Death of George IV.



HE Duke of Wellington applied himself to the treatment of the critical circumstances of 1830 with that blended patience and quickness of perception to which he owed the success of many campaigns. Quite conscious of the difficulties he had to encounter, he was nevertheless full of confidence in his ability to control them. It is probable that the paramount desire of the Duke in his effort to confirm his power was to rally and restore the ranks of the Tory party, disturbed rather than broken up by the passing of the Relief Bill. During the very heat of the struggle it was significantly observed that the head of the powerful family of Lowther, in the House of Commons, was never asked to resign his office, although both himself and his following voted invariably against the Government measure. The order of the day was the utmost courtesy to the rebels, who were treated, as some alleged, with more consideration than the compliant. At the same time the desire of the Whigs to connect, perhaps even to merge themselves in the ministerial ranks, was not neglected. A Whig had

been appointed to succeed the eccentric and too uncompromising Wetherell in the office of attorney-general; other posts had been placed at their disposal, and one even, an old companion-in-arms of the Duke, had entered the cabinet. The confidence in the Duke's star was not diminished, and under ordinary circumstances this balanced strategy would probably have been successful. But it was destined to cope with great and unexpected events.

The first was the unexpected demise of the Crown. The death of King George the Fourth at the end of the month of June, according to the then existing constitution, necessitated a dissolution of Parliament, and so deprived the Minister of that invaluable quality of time, necessary to soften and win back his estranged friends. Nevertheless, it is not improbable that the Duke might still have succeeded, had it not been for the occurrence of the French insurrection of 1830, in the very heat of the preparations for the general election in England. The Whigs, who found the Duke going to the country without that reconstruction of his ministry on which they had counted, saw their opportunity and seized it. The triumphant riots of Paris were dignified into 'the three glorious days,' and the three glorious days were universally recognised as the triumph of civil and religious liberty. The names of Polignac and Wellington were adroitly connected together, and the phrase 'Parliamentary Reform' began to circulate.

It was Zenobia's last reception for the season; on the morrow she was about to depart for her county, and canvass for her candidates. She was still undaunted, and never more inspiring. The excitement

of the times was reflected in her manner. She addressed her arriving guests as they made their obeisance to her, asked for news and imparted it before she could be answered, declared that nothing had been more critical since '93, that there was only one man who was able to deal with the situation, and thanked Heaven he was not only in England, but in her drawing-room.

Ferrars, who had been dining with his patron, Lord Pomeroy, and had the satisfaction of feeling that at any rate his return to the new Parliament was certain, while helping himself to coffee could not refrain from saying in a low tone to a gentleman who was performing the same office, 'Our Whig friends seem in high spirits, Baron.'

The gentleman thus addressed was Baron Sergius, a man of middle age. His countenance was singularly intelligent, tempered with an expression mild and winning. He had attended the Congress of Vienna to represent a fallen party, a difficult and ungracious task, but he had shown such high qualities in the fulfilment of his painful duties—so much knowledge, so much self-control, and so much wise and unaffected conciliation—that he had won universal respect, and especially with the English plenipotentiaries, so that when he visited England, which he did frequently, the houses of both parties were open to him, and he was as intimate with the Whigs as he was with the great Duke, by whom he was highly esteemed.

'As we have got our coffee, let us sit down,' said the Baron, and they withdrew to a settee against the wall.

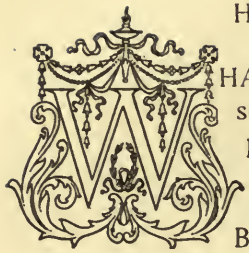
'You know I am a Liberal, and have always been a Liberal,' said the Baron; 'I know the value of civil and religious liberty, for I was born in a country where we had neither, and where we have since enjoyed either very fitfully. Nothing can be much drearier than the present lot of my country, and it is probable that these doings at Paris may help my friends a little, and they may again hold up their heads for a time; but I have seen too much, and am too old, to indulge in dreams. You are a young man and will live to see what I can only predict. The world is thinking of something else than civil and religious liberty. Those are phrases of the eighteenth century. The men who have won these "three glorious days" at Paris, want neither civilisation nor religion. They will not be content till they have destroyed both.

'It is possible,' he continued, 'that they may be parried for a time; that the adroit wisdom of the house of Orleans, guided by Talleyrand, may give this movement the resemblance, and even the character, of a middle-class revolution. It is no such thing; the barricades were not erected by the middle class. I know these people; it is a fraternity, not a nation. Europe is honeycombed with their secret societies. They are spread all over Spain. Italy is entirely mined. I know more of the southern than the northern nations; but I have been assured, by one who should know, that the brotherhood are organised throughout Germany and even in Russia. I have spoken to the Duke about these things. He is not indifferent, or altogether incredulous, but he is so essentially practical that he can only deal with what he sees. I have spoken to the Whig leaders. They

tell me that there is only one specific, and that a complete one — constitutional government; that with representative institutions, secret societies cannot co-exist. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that with these secret societies representative institutions rather will disappear.'

CHAPTER VIII.

Hopes and Fears.



HAT unexpectedly took place in the southern part of England, and especially in the maritime counties, during the autumn of 1830, seemed rather to confirm the intimations of Baron Sergius. The people in the rural districts had become disaffected. Their discontent was generally attributed to the abuses of the Poor Law, and to the lowness of their wages. But the abuses of the Poor Law, though intolerable, were generally in favour of the labourer, and though wages in some parts were unquestionably low, it was observed that the tumultuous assemblies, ending frequently in riot, were held in districts where this cause did not prevail. The most fearful feature of the approaching anarchy was the frequent acts of incendiaries. The blazing homesteads baffled the feeble police and the helpless magistrates; and the government had reason to believe that foreign agents were actively promoting these mysterious crimes.

Amid partial discontent and general dejection came the crash of the Wellington ministry, and it required all the inspiration of Zenobia to sustain William Ferrars under the trial. But she was undaunted and

sanguine as a morning in spring. Nothing could persuade her that the Whigs could ever form a government, and she was quite sure that the clerks in the public offices alone could turn them out. When the Whig government was formed, and its terrible programme announced, she laughed it to scorn, and derided with inexhaustible merriment the idea of the House of Commons passing a Reform Bill. She held a great assembly the night that General Gascoyne defeated the first measure, and passed an evening of ecstasy in giving and receiving congratulations. The morrow brought a graver brow, but still an indomitable spirit, and through all these tempestuous times Zenobia never quailed, though mobs burnt the castles of dukes and the palaces of bishops.

Serious as was the state of affairs to William Ferrars, his condition was not so desperate as that of some of his friends. His seat at least was safe in the new Parliament that was to pass a Reform Bill. As for the Tories generally, they were swept off the board. Scarcely a constituency, in which was a popular element, was faithful to them. The counties in those days were the great expounders of popular principles, and whenever England was excited, which was rare, she spoke through her freeholders. In this instance almost every Tory knight of the shire lost his seat except Lord Chandos, the member for Buckinghamshire, who owed his success entirely to his personal popularity. 'Never mind,' said Zenobia, 'what does it signify? The Lords will throw it out.'

And bravely and unceasingly she worked for this end. To assist this purpose it was necessary that a lengthened and powerful resistance to the measure should be made in the Commons; that the public

mind should be impressed with its dangerous principles, and its promoters cheapened by the exposure of their corrupt arrangements and their inaccurate details. It must be confessed that these objects were resolutely kept in view, and that the Tory opposition evinced energy and abilities not unworthy of a great parliamentary occasion. Ferrars particularly distinguished himself. He rose immensely in the estimation of the House, and soon the public began to talk of him. His statistics about the condemned boroughs were astounding and unanswerable: he was the only man who seemed to know anything of the elements of the new ones. He was as eloquent too as exact,—sometimes as fervent as Burke, and always as accurate as Cocker.

'I never thought it was in William Ferrars,' said a member, musingly, to a companion as they walked home one night; 'I always thought him a good man of business, and all that sort of thing—but, somehow or other, I did not think this was in him.'

'Well, he has a good deal at stake, and that brings it out of a fellow,' said his friend.

It was, however, pouring water upon sand. Any substantial resistance to the measure was from the first out of the question. Lord Chandos accomplished the only important feat, and that was the enfranchisement of the farmers. This perpetual struggle, however, occasioned a vast deal of excitement, and the actors in it often indulged in the wild credulity of impossible expectations. The saloon of Zenobia was ever thronged, and she was never more confident than when the bill passed the Commons. She knew that the King would never give his assent to the bill. His Majesty had had quite enough of going down in

hackney coaches to carry revolutions. After all, he was the son of good King George, and the court would save the country, as it had often done before. 'But it will not come to that,' she added. 'The Lords will do their duty.'

'But Lord Waverley tells me,' said Ferrars, 'that there are forty of them who were against the bill last year who will vote for the second reading.'

'Never mind Lord Waverley and such addlebrains,' said Zenobia, with a smile of triumphant mystery. 'So long as we have the court, the Duke, and Lord Lyndhurst on our side, we can afford to laugh at such conceited poltroons. His mother was my dearest friend, and I know he used to have fits. Look bright,' she continued; 'things never were better. Before a week has passed these people will be nowhere.'

'But how is it possible?'

'Trust me.'

'I always do—and yet'——

'You never were nearer being a cabinet minister,' she said, with a radiant glance.

And Zenobia was right. Though the government, with the aid of the waverers, carried the second reading of the bill, a week afterwards, on May 7, Lord Lyndhurst rallied the waverers again to his standard and carried his famous resolution, that the enfranchising clauses should precede the disfranchisement in the great measure. Lord Grey and his colleagues resigned, and the King sent for Lord Lyndhurst. The bold chief Baron advised His Majesty to consult the Duke of Wellington, and was himself the bearer of the King's message to Apsley House. The Duke found the King 'in great distress,' and he therefore did not hesitate in promising to endeavour to form a ministry.

'Who was right?' said Zenobia to Mr. Ferrars. 'He is so busy he could not write to you, but he told me to tell you to call at Apsley House at twelve to-morrow. You will be in the cabinet.'

'I have got it at last!' said Ferrars to himself. 'It is worth living for and at any peril. All the cares of life sink into insignificance under such circumstances. The difficulties are great, but their very greatness will furnish the means of their solution. The Crown cannot be dragged in the mud, and the Duke was born for conquest.'

A day passed, and another day, and Ferrars was not again summoned. The affair seemed to hang fire. Zenobia was still brave, but Ferrars, who knew her thoroughly, could detect her lurking anxiety. Then she told him in confidence that Sir Robert made difficulties, 'but there is nothing in it,' she added. 'The Duke has provided for everything, and he means Sir Robert to be Premier. He could not refuse that; it would be almost an act of treason.' Two days after she sent for Mr. Ferrars, early in the morning, and received him in her boudoir. Her countenance was excited, but serious. 'Don't be alarmed,' she said; 'nothing will prevent a government being formed, but Sir Robert has thrown us over; I never had confidence in him. It is most provoking, as Mr. Baring had joined us, and it was such a good name for the City. But the failure of one man is the opportunity of another. We want a leader in the House of Commons. He must be a man who can speak; of experience, who knows the House, its forms, and all that. There is only one man indicated. You cannot doubt about him. I told you honours would be tumbling on your head. You are the man; you are to

have one of the highest offices in the cabinet, and lead the House of Commons.'

'Peel declines,' said Ferrars, speaking slowly and shaking his head. 'That is very serious.'

'For himself,' said Zenobia, 'not for you. It makes your fortune.'

'The difficulties seem too great to contend with.'

'What difficulties are there? You have got the court, and you have got the House of Lords. Mr. Pitt was not nearly so well off, for he had never been in office, and had at the same time to fight Lord North and that wicked Mr. Fox, the orator of the day, while you have only got Lord Althorp, who can't order his own dinner.'

'I am in amazement,' said Ferrars, and he seemed plunged in thought.

'But you do not hesitate?'

'No,' he said, looking up dreamily, for he had been lost in abstraction; and speaking in a measured and hollow voice, 'I do not hesitate.' Then resuming a brisk tone he said, 'This is not an age for hesitation; if asked, I will do the deed.'

At this moment there was a tap at the door, and the groom of the chambers brought in a note for Mr. Ferrars, which had been forwarded from his own residence, and which requested his presence at Apsley House. Having read it, he gave it to Zenobia, who exclaimed with delight, 'Do not lose a moment. I am so glad to have got rid of Sir Robert with his doubts and his difficulties. We want new blood.'

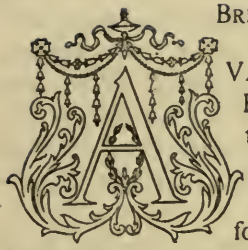
That was a wonderful walk for William Ferrars, from St. James' Square to Apsley House. As he moved along, he was testing his courage and capacity for the sharp trials that awaited him. He felt

himself not unequal to conjunctures in which he had never previously indulged even in imagination. His had been an ambitious, rather than a soaring spirit. He had never contemplated the possession of power except under the ægis of some commanding chief. Now it was for him to control senates and guide councils. He screwed himself up to the sticking-point. Desperation is sometimes as powerful an inspirer as genius.

The great man was alone,—calm, easy, and courteous. He had sent for Mr. Ferrars, because having had one interview with him, in which his co-operation had been requested in the conduct of affairs, the Duke thought it was due to him to give him the earliest intimation of the change of circumstances. The vote of the House of Commons on the motion of Lord Ebrington had placed an insurmountable barrier to the formation of a government, and his Grace had accordingly relinquished the commission with which he had been entrusted by the King.

CHAPTER IX.

Breaking the News.



VAILING himself of his latch-key, Ferrars re-entered his home unnoticed. He went at once to his library, and locked the door of the apartment. There sitting before his desk, he buried his face in his hands and remained in that posture for a considerable time.

They were tumultuous and awful thoughts that passed over his brain. The dreams of a life were dissipated, and he had to encounter the stern reality of his position — and that was Ruin. He was without hope and without resource. His debts were vast; his patrimony was a fable; and the mysterious inheritance of his wife had been tampered with. The elder Ferrars had left an insolvent estate; he had supported his son liberally, but latterly from his son's own resources. The father had made himself the principal trustee of the son's marriage settlement. His colleague, a relative of the heiress, had died, and care was taken that no one should be substituted in his stead. All this had been discovered by Ferrars on his father's death, but ambition, and the excitement of a life of blended elation and peril, had sus-

tained him under the concussion. One by one every chance had vanished: first his private means and then his public prospects; he had lost office, and now he was about to lose Parliament. His whole position, so long, and carefully, and skilfully built up, seemed to dissolve and dissipate into insignificant fragments. And now he had to break the situation to his wife. She was to become the unprepared partner of the secret which had gnawed at his heart for years, during which to her his mien had often been smiling and always serene. Mrs. Ferrars was at home, and alone, in her luxurious boudoir, and he went to her at once. After years of dissimulation, now that all was over, Ferrars could not bear the suspense of four-and-twenty hours.

It was difficult to bring her into a mood of mind capable of comprehending a tithe of what she had to learn; and yet the darkest part of the tale she was never to know. Mrs. Ferrars, though singularly intuitive, shrank from controversy, and settled everything by contradiction and assertion. She maintained for a long time that what her husband communicated to her could not be; that it was absurd and even impossible. After a while, she talked of selling her diamonds and reducing her equipages, sacrificing which she assumed would put everything right. And when she found her husband still grave and still intimating that the sacrifices must be beyond all this, and that they must prepare for the life and habits of another social sphere, she became violent, and wept and declared her wrong; that she had been deceived and outraged and infamously treated.

Remembering how long and with what apparent serenity in her presence he had endured his secret

woes, and how one of the principal objects of his life had ever been to guard her even from a shade of solicitude, even the restrained Ferrars was affected; his countenance changed and his eyes became suffused. When she observed this, she suddenly threw her arms round his neck and with many embraces, amid sighs and tears, exclaimed, 'O William! if we love each other, what does anything signify?'

And what could anything signify under such circumstances and on such conditions? As Ferrars pressed his beautiful wife to his heart, he remembered only his early love, which seemed entirely to revive. Unconsciously to himself, too, he was greatly relieved by this burst of tenderness on her part, for the prospect of this interview had been most distressful to him. 'My darling,' he said, 'ours is not a case of common imprudence or misfortune. We are the victims of a revolution, and we must bear our lot as becomes us under such circumstances. Individual misfortunes are merged in the greater catastrophe of the country.'

'That is the true view,' said his wife; 'and, after all, the poor King of France is much worse off than we are. However, I cannot now buy the Duchesse of Sevres' lace, which I had promised her to do. It is rather awkward. However, the best way always is to speak the truth. I must tell the Duchesse I am powerless, and that we are the victims of a revolution, like herself.'

Then they began to talk quite cosily together over their prospects, he sitting on the sofa by her side and holding her hand. Mrs. Ferrars would not hear of retiring to the Continent. 'No,' she said, with all her sanguine vein returning, 'you always used to say

I brought you luck, and I will bring you luck yet. There must be a reaction. The wheel will turn and bring round our friends again. Do not let us then be out of the way. Your claims are immense. They must do something for you. They ought to give you India, and if we only set our mind upon it, we shall get it. Depend upon it, things are not so bad as they seem. What appear to be calamities are often the sources of fortune. I would much sooner that you should be Governor-General than a cabinet minister. That odious House of Commons is very wearisome. I am not sure any constitution can bear it very long. I am not sure whether I would not prefer being Governor-General of India even to being Prime Minister.'

CHAPTER X.

Retirement.

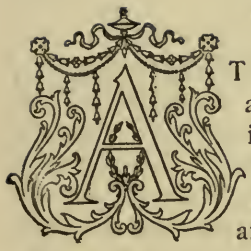
N CONSEQUENCE of the registration under the Reform Act it was not possible for Parliament to be dissolved, and an appeal made to the new constituency, until the end of the year. This was advantageous to Mr. Ferrars, and afforded him six months of personal security to arrange his affairs. Both husband and wife were proud, and were anxious to quit the world with dignity. All were so busy about themselves at that period, and the vicissitudes of life between continental revolutions and English reform so various and extensive, that it was not difficult to avoid the scrutiny of society. Mrs. Ferrars broke to Zenobia that, as her husband was no longer to be in Parliament, they had resolved to retire for some time to a country life, though, as Mr. Ferrars had at length succeeded in impressing on his wife that their future income was to be counted by hundreds, instead of thousands, it was difficult for her to realise a rural establishment that should combine dignity and economy. Without, however, absolutely alleging the cause, she contrived to baffle the various propositions

of this kind which the energetic Zenobia made to her, and while she listened with apparent interest to accounts of deer parks, and extensive shooting, and delightful neighbourhoods, would just exclaim, 'Charming! but rather more, I fancy, than we require, for we mean to be very quiet till my girl is presented.'

That young lady was now thirteen, and though her parents were careful to say nothing in her presence which would materially reveal their real situation, for which they intended very gradually to prepare her, the scrutinising powers with which nature had prodigally invested their daughter were not easily baffled. She asked no questions, but nothing seemed to escape the penetrative glance of that dark blue eye, calm amid all the mystery, and tolerating rather than sharing the frequent embrace of her parents. After a while her brother came home from Eton, to which he was never to return. A few days before this event she became unusually restless, and even agitated. When he arrived, neither Mr. nor Mrs. Ferrars was at home. He knocked gaily at the door, a schoolboy's knock, and was hardly in the hall when his name was called, and he caught the face of his sister, leaning over the balustrade of the landing-place. He ran upstairs with wondrous speed, and was in an instant locked in her arms. She kissed him and kissed him again, and when he tried to speak, she stopped his mouth with kisses. And then she said, 'Something has happened. What it is I cannot make out, but we are to have no more ponies.'

CHAPTER XI.

HURSTLEY.



T THE foot of the Berkshire downs, and itself on a gentle elevation, there is an old hall with gable ends and lattice windows, standing in grounds which once were stately, and where there are yet glade-like terraces of yew trees, which give an air of dignity to a neglected scene. In the front of the hall huge gates of iron, highly wrought, and bearing an ancient date as well as the shield of a noble house, opened on a village green, round which were clustered the cottages of the parish with only one exception, and that was the vicarage house, a modern building, not without taste, and surrounded by a small but brilliant garden. The church was contiguous to the hall, and had been raised by the lord on a portion of his domain. Behind the hall and its enclosure, the country was common land but picturesque. It had once been a beech forest, and though the timber had been greatly cleared, the green land was still occasionally dotted, sometimes with groups and sometimes with single trees, while the juniper which here abounded, and rose to a great height, gave a rich wildness to the scene, and sustained its forest character.

Hurstley had for many years been deserted by the family to which it belonged. Indeed, it was rather difficult to say to whom it did belong. A dreary fate had awaited an ancient, and, in its time, even not immemorable, home. It had fallen into chancery, and for the last half-century had either been uninhabited or let to strangers. Mr. Ferrars' lawyer was in the chancery suit, and knew all about it. The difficulty of finding a tenant for such a place, never easy, was increased by its remoteness from any railway communication, which was now beginning to figure as an important element in such arrangements. The Master in Chancery would be satisfied with a nominal rent, provided only he could obtain a family of consideration to hold under him. Mr. Ferrars was persuaded to go down alone to reconnoitre the place. It pleased him. It was aristocratic, yet singularly inexpensive. The house contained an immense hall, which reached the roof, and which would have become a baronial mansion, and a vast staircase in keeping; but the living rooms were moderate, even small, in dimensions, and not numerous. The land he was expected to take consisted only of a few meadows, which he could let if necessary, and a single labourer could manage the garden.

Mrs. Ferrars was so delighted with the description of the galleried hall, that she resolved on their taking Hurstley without even her previously visiting it. The only thing she cared for in the country were a hall and a pony-chair.

All the carriages were sold, and all the servants discharged. Two or three maid-servants and a man who must be found in the country, who could attend them at table, and valet alike his master and the

pony, was the establishment which was to succeed the crowd of retainers who had so long lounged away their lives in the saloons of Hill Street, and the groves and gardens of Wimbledon.

Mr. and Mrs. Ferrars and their daughter travelled down to Hurstley in a post-chaise; Endymion, with the servants, was sent by the stage-coach, which accomplished the journey of sixty miles in ten hours. Myra said little during the journey, but an expression of ineffable contempt and disgust seemed permanent on her countenance. Sometimes she shrugged her shoulders, sometimes she raised her eyebrows, and sometimes she turned up her nose. And then she gave a sigh; but it was a sigh not of sorrow, but of impatience. Her parents lavished attentions on her which she accepted without recognition, only occasionally observing that she wished she had gone with Endymion.

It was dusk when they arrived at Hurstley, and the melancholy hour did not tend to raise their spirits. However, the gardener's wife had lit a good fire of beechwood in the drawing-room, and threw as they entered a pannier of cones upon the logs, which crackled and cheerfully blazed away. Even Myra seemed interested by the novelty of the wood fire and the iron dogs. She remained by their side, looking abstractedly on the expiring logs, while her parents wandered about the house and examined or prepared the requisite arrangements. While they were yet absent, there was some noise and a considerable bustle in the hall. Endymion and his retinue had arrived. Then Myra immediately roused herself, and listened like a startled deer. But the moment she caught his voice, an expression of rapture suffused

her countenance. It beamed with vivacity and delight. She rushed away, pushed through the servants and the luggage, embraced him and said, 'We will go over the house and see our rooms together.'

Wandering without a guide and making many mistakes, fortunately they soon met their parents. Mrs. Ferrars good-naturedly recommenced her labours of inspection, and explained all her plans. There was a very pretty room for Endymion, and to-morrow it was to be very comfortable. He was quite pleased. Then they were shown Myra's room, but she said nothing, standing by with a sweet scoff, as it were, lingering on her lips, while her mother disserted on all the excellences of the chamber. Then they were summoned to tea. The gardener's wife was quite a leading spirit, and had prepared everything; the curtains were drawn, and the room lighted; an urn hissed; there were piles of bread and butter and a pyramid of buttered toast. It was wonderful what an air of comfort had been conjured up in this dreary mansion, and it was impossible for the travellers, however wearied or chagrined, to be insensible to the convenience and cheerfulness of all around them.

When the meal was over, the children sat together in whispering tattle. Mrs. Ferrars had left the room to see if all was ready for their hour of retirement, and Mr. Ferrars was walking up and down the room, absorbed in thought.

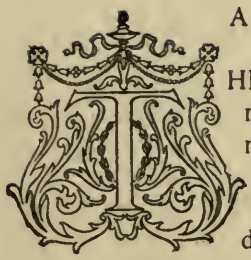
'What do you think of it all, Endymion?' whispered Myra to her twin.

'I rather like it,' he replied.

She looked at him with a glance of blended love and mockery, and then she said in his ear, 'I feel as if we had fallen from some star.'

CHAPTER XII.

A New Existence.



HE morrow brought a bright autumnal morn, and every one woke, if not happy, interested. There was much to see and much to do. The dew was so heavy that the children were not allowed to quit the broad gravel walk that bounded one side of the old house, but they caught enticing vistas of the gleamy glades, and the abounding light and shade softened and adorned everything. Every sight and sound too was novel, and from the rabbit that started out of the grove, stared at them and then disappeared, to the jays chattering in the more distant woods, all was wonderment at least for a week. They saw squirrels for the first time, and for the first time beheld a hedgehog. Their parents were busy in the house; Mr. Ferrars unpacking and settling his books, and his wife arranging some few articles of ornamental furniture that had been saved from the London wreck, and rendering their usual room of residence as refined as was in her power. It is astonishing how much effect a woman of taste can produce with a pretty chair or two full of fancy and colour, a table clothed

with a few books, some family miniatures, a work-bag of rich material, and some toys that we never desert. 'I have not much to work with,' said Mrs. Ferrars, with a sigh, 'but I think the colouring is pretty.'

On the second day after their arrival, the rector and his wife made them a visit. Mr. Penruddock was a naturalist, and had written the history of his parish. He had escaped being an Oxford don by being preferred early to this college living, but he had married the daughter of a don, who appreciated the grand manners of their new acquaintances, and who, when she had overcome their first rather awe-inspiring impression, became communicative and amused them much with her details respecting the little world in which they were now to live. She could not conceal her wonderment at the beauty of the twins, though they were no longer habited in those dresses which had once astonished even Mayfair.

Part of the scheme of the new life was the education of the children by their parents. Mr. Ferrars had been a distinguished scholar, and was still a good one. He was patient and methodical, and deeply interested in his contemplated task. So far as disposition was concerned the pupil was not disappointing. Endymion was of an affectionate disposition and inclined to treat his father with deference. He was gentle and docile; but he did not acquire knowledge with facility, and was remarkably deficient in that previous information on which his father counted.

The other pupil had a different temperament. She learned with a glance, and remembered with extraordinary tenacity everything she had acquired. But she was neither tender nor deferential, and to induce her

to study you could not depend on the affections, but only on her intelligence. So she was often fitful, capricious, or provoking, and her mother, who, though accomplished and eager, had neither the method nor the self-restraint of Mr. Ferrars, was often annoyed and irritable. Then there were scenes, or rather ebullitions on one side, for Myra was always unmoved and enraging from her total want of sensibility. Sometimes it became necessary to appeal to Mr. Ferrars, and her manner to her father, though devoid of feeling, was at least not contemptuous. Nevertheless, on the whole the scheme, as time went on promised to be not unsuccessful. Endymion, though not rapidly, advanced surely, and made some amends for the years that had been wasted in fashionable private schools and the then frivolity of Eton. Myra, who, notwithstanding her early days of indulgence, had enjoyed the advantage of admirable governesses, was well grounded in more than one modern language, and she soon mastered them. And in due time, though much after the period on which we are now touching, she announced her desire to become acquainted with German, in those days a much rarer acquirement than at present. Her mother could not help her in this respect, and that was perhaps an additional reason for the study of this tongue, for Myra was impatient of tuition, and not unjustly full of self-confidence. She took also the keenest interest in the progress of her brother, made herself acquainted with all his lessons, and sometimes helped him in their achievement.

Though they had absolutely no acquaintance of any kind except the rector and his family, life was not dull. Mr. Ferrars was always employed, for be-

sides the education of his children, he had systematically resumed a habit in which he had before occasionally indulged, and that was political composition. He had in his lofty days been the author of more than one essay, in the most celebrated periodical publication of the Tories, which had commanded attention and obtained celebrity. Many a public man of high rank and reputation, and even more than one Prime Minister, had contributed in their time to its famous pages, but never without being paid. It was the organic law of this publication that gratuitous contributions should never be admitted. And in this principle there was as much wisdom as pride. Celebrated statesmen would point with complacency to the snuff-box or the picture which had been purchased by their literary labour, and there was more than one bracelet on the arm of Mrs. Ferrars, and more than one genet in her stable, which had been the reward of a profound or a slashing article by William.

What had been the occasional diversion of political life was now to be the source of regular income. Though living in profound solitude, Ferrars had a vast sum of political experience to draw upon, and though his training and general intelligence were in reality too exclusive and academical for the stirring age which had now opened, and on which he had unhappily fallen, they nevertheless suited the audience to which they were particularly addressed. His Corinthian style, in which the Mænad of Mr. Burke was habited in the last mode of Almack's, his sarcasms against the illiterate and his invectives against the low, his descriptions of the country life of the aristocracy contrasted with the horrors of the guillotine, his Horatian allusions and his Virgilian passages, combined to

produce a whole which equally fascinated and alarmed his readers.

These contributions occasioned some communications with the editor or publisher of the *Review*, which were not without interest. Parcels came down by the coach, enclosing not merely proof sheets, but frequently new books — the pamphlet of the hour before it was published, or a volume of discoveries in unknown lands. It was a link to the world they had quitted without any painful associations. Otherwise their communications with the outer world were slight and rare. It is difficult for us, who live in an age of railroads, telegraphs, penny posts and penny newspapers, to realise how uneventful, how limited in thought and feeling, as well as in incident, was the life of an English family of retired habits and limited means, only forty years ago. The whole world seemed to be morally, as well as materially, *adscripti glebæ*.

Mr. and Mrs. Ferrars did not wish to move, but had they so wished, it would have been under any circumstances for them a laborious and costly affair. The only newspaper they saw was the *Evening Mail*, which arrived three times a week, and was the *Times* newspaper with all its contents except its advertisements. As the *Times* newspaper had the credit of mainly contributing to the passing of Lord Grey's Reform Bill, and was then whispered to enjoy the incredible sale of twelve thousand copies daily, Mr. Ferrars assumed that in its columns he would trace the most authentic intimations of coming events. The cost of postage was then so heavy that domestic correspondence was necessarily very restricted. But this vexatious limitation hardly applied to the Ferrars. They had never paid postage. They were born

and had always lived in the franking world, and although Mr. Ferrars had now himself lost the privilege, both official and parliamentary, still all their correspondents were frankers, and they addressed their replies without compunction to those who were free. Nevertheless, it was astonishing how little in their new life they cared to avail themselves of this correspondence. At first Zenobia wrote every week, almost every day, to Mrs. Ferrars, but after a time Mrs. Ferrars, though at first pleased by the attention, felt its recognition a burthen. Then Zenobia, who at length, for the first time in her life, had taken a gloomy view of affairs, relapsed into a long silence, and in fact had nearly forgotten the Ferrars, for as she herself used to say, 'How can one recollect people whom one never meets?'

In the meantime, for we have been a little anticipating in our last remarks, the family at Hurstley were much pleased with the country they now inhabited. They made excursions of discovery into the interior of their world, Mrs. Ferrars and Myra in the pony-chair, her husband and Endymion walking by their side, and Endymion sometimes taking his sister's seat against his wish, but in deference to her irresistible will. Even Myra could hardly be insensible to the sylvan wildness of the old chase, and the romantic villages in the wooded clefts of the downs. As for Endymion he was delighted, and it seemed to him, perhaps he unconsciously felt it, that this larger and more frequent experience of nature was a compensation for much which they had lost.

After a time, when they had become a little acquainted with their simple neighbourhood, and the first impression of wildness and novelty had worn

out, the twins were permitted to walk together alone, though within certain limits. The village and its vicinity was quite free, but they were not permitted to enter the woods, and not to wander on the chase out of sight of the mansion. These walks alone with Endymion were the greatest pleasure of his sister. She delighted to make him tell her of his life at Eton, and if she ever sighed it was when she lamented that his residence there had been so short. Then they found an inexhaustible fund of interest and sympathy in the past. They wondered if they ever should have ponies again. 'I think not,' said Myra, 'and yet how merry to scamper together over this chase!'

'But they would not let us go,' said Endymion, 'without a groom.'

'A groom!' exclaimed Myra, with an elfish laugh; 'I believe if the truth were really known, we ought to be making our own beds and washing our own dinner plates.'

'And are you sorry, Myra, for all that has happened?' asked Endymion.

'I hardly know what has happened. They keep it very close. But I am too astonished to be sorry. Besides, what is the use of whimpering?'

'I cried very much one day,' said Endymion.

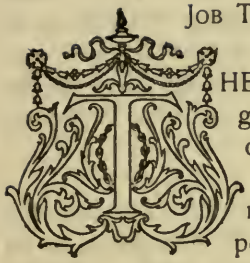
'Ah, you are soft, dear darling. I never cried in my life, except once with rage.'

At Christmas a new character appeared on the stage, the rector's son, Nigel. He had completed a year with a private tutor, and was on the eve of commencing his first term at Oxford, being eighteen, nearly five years older than the twins. He was tall, with a countenance of remarkable intelligence and power, though still softened by the innocence and

bloom of boyhood. He was destined to be a clergyman. The twins were often thrown into his society, for though too old to be their mere companion, his presence was an excuse for Mrs. Penruddock more frequently joining them in their strolls, and under her auspices their wanderings had no limit, except the shortness of the days; but they found some compensation for this in their frequent visits to the rectory, which was a cheerful and agreeable home, full of stuffed birds, and dried plants, and marvellous fishes, and other innocent trophies and triumphs over nature.

CHAPTER XIII.

Job Thornberry's Views.



HE tenant of the Manor Farm was a good specimen of his class; a thorough Saxon, ruddy and bright-visaged, with an athletic though rather bulky frame, hardened by exposure to the seasons and constant exercise. Although he was the tenant of several hundred acres, he had an eye to the main chance in little things, which is a characteristic of farmers, but he was good-natured and obliging, and while he foraged their pony, furnished their woodyard with logs and faggots, and supplied them from his dairy, he gratuitously performed for the family at the hall many other offices which tended to their comfort and convenience, but which cost him nothing.

Mr. Ferrars liked to have a chat every now and then with Farmer Thornberry, who had a shrewd and idiomatic style of expressing his limited, but in its way complete, experience of men and things, which was amusing and interesting to a man of the world whose knowledge of rural life was mainly derived from grand shooting parties at great houses.

The pride and torment of Farmer Thornberry's life was his only child, Job.

'I gave him the best of educations,' said the farmer; 'he had a much better chance than I had myself, for I do not pretend to be a scholar, and never was; and yet I cannot make head or tail of him. I wish you would speak to him some day, sir. He goes against the land, and yet we have been on it for three generations, and have nothing to complain of; and he is a good farmer, too, is Job, none better; a little too fond of experimenting, but then he is young. But I am very much afraid he will leave me. I think it is this new thing the big-wigs have set up in London that has put him wrong, for he is always reading their papers.'

'And what is that?' said Mr. Ferrars.

'Well, they call themselves the Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge, and Lord Brougham is at the head of it.'

'Ah! he is a dangerous man,' said Mr. Ferrars.

'Do you know, I think he is,' said Farmer Thornberry, very seriously, 'and by this token, he says a knowledge of chemistry is necessary for the cultivation of the soil.'

'Brougham is a man who would say anything,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'and of one thing you may be quite certain, that there is no subject which Lord Brougham knows thoroughly. I have proved that, and if you ever have time some winter evening to read something on the matter, I will lend you a number of the *Quarterly Review* which might interest you.'

'I wish you would lend it to Job,' said the farmer.

Mr. Ferrars found Job not so manageable in controversy as his father. His views were peculiar, and his conclusions certain. He had more than a smattering too of political economy, a kind of knowledge

which Mr. Ferrars viewed with suspicion; for though he had himself been looked upon as enlightened in this respect in the last years of Lord Liverpool, when Lord Wallace and Mr. Huskisson were astonishing the world, he had relapsed, after the schism of the Tory party, into orthodoxy, and was satisfied that the tenets of the economists were mere theories, or could only be reduced into practice by revolution.

'But it is a pleasant life, that of a farmer,' said Mr. Ferrars to Job.

'Yes, but life should be something more than pleasant,' said Job, who always looked discontented; 'an ox in a pasture has a pleasant life.'

'Well, and why should it not be a profitable one, too?' said Mr. Ferrars.

'I do not see my way to that,' said Job moodily; 'there is not much to be got out of the land at any time, and still less on the terms we hold it.'

'But you are not high-rented!'

'Oh, rent is nothing, if everything else were right, but nothing is right,' said Job. 'In the first place, a farmer is the only trader who has no security for his capital.'

'Ah! you want a lease?'

'I should be very sorry to have a lease like any that I have seen,' replied Job. 'We had one once in our family, and we keep it as a curiosity. It is ten skins long, and more tyrannical nonsense was never engrossed by man.'

'But your family, I believe, has been on this estate for generations now,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'and they have done well.'

'They have done about as well as their stock. They have existed,' said Job; 'nothing more.'

'Your father always gives me quite the idea of a prosperous man,' said Mr. Ferrars.

'Whether he be or not I am sure I cannot say,' said Job; 'for as neither he nor any of his predecessors ever kept any accounts, it is rather difficult to ascertain their exact condition. So long as he has money enough in his pocket to pay his labourers and buy a little stock, my father, like every British farmer, is content. The fact is, he is a serf as much as his men, and until we get rid of feudalism he will remain so.'

'These are strong opinions,' said Mr. Ferrars, drawing himself up and looking a little cold.

'Yes, but they will make their way,' said Job. 'So far as I myself am concerned, I do not much care what happens to the land, for I do not mean to remain on it; but I care for the country. For the sake of the country I should like to see the whole thing upset.'

'What thing?' asked Mr. Ferrars.

'Feudalism,' said Job. 'I should like to see this estate managed on the same principles as they do their great establishments in the north of England. Instead of feudalism, I would substitute the commercial principle. I would have long leases without covenants; no useless timber, and no game.'

'Why, you would destroy the country,' said Mr. Ferrars.

'We owe everything to the large towns,' said Job.

'The people in the large towns are miserable,' said Mr. Ferrars.

'They cannot be more miserable than the people in the country,' said Job.

'Their wretchedness is notorious,' said Mr. Ferrars. 'Look at their riots,'

'Well, we had Swing in the country only two or three years ago.'

Mr. Ferrars looked sad. The reminiscence was too near and too fatal. After a pause he said with an air of decision, and as if imparting a state secret, 'If it were not for the agricultural districts, the King's army could not be recruited.'

'Well, that would not break my heart,' said Job.

'Why, my good fellow, you are a Radical!'

'They may call me what they like,' said Job; 'but it will not alter matters. However, I am going among the Radicals soon, and then I shall know what they are.'

'And can you leave your truly respectable parent?' said Mr. Ferrars rather solemnly, for he remembered his promise to Farmer Thornberry to speak seriously to his son.

'Oh! my respectable parent will do very well without me, sir. Only let him be able to drive into Bamford on market day, and get two or three linen-drapers to take their hats off to him, and he will be happy enough, and always ready to die for our glorious Constitution.'

CHAPTER XIV.

Endymion's Future.

EIGHTEEN hundred and thirty-two, the darkest and most distressing year in the life of Mr. Ferrars, closed in comparative calm and apparent content. He was himself greatly altered, both in manner and appearance. He was kind and gentle, but he was silent, and rarely smiled. His hair was grizzled, and he began to stoop. But he was always employed, and was interested in his labours.

His sanguine wife bore up against their misfortunes with far more animation. She was at first amused with her new life, and when she was accustomed to it, she found a never-failing resource in her conviction of a coming reaction. Mrs. Ferrars possessed most feminine qualities, and many of them in excess. She could not reason, but her intuition was remarkable. She was of opinion that 'these people never could go on,' and that they must necessarily be succeeded by William and his friends. In vain her husband, when she pressed her views and convictions on him, would shake his head over the unprecedented majority of the government, and sigh while he ac-

knowledged that the Tories absolutely did not now command one-fifth of the House of Commons; his shakes and sighs were equally disregarded by her, and she persisted in her dreams of riding upon elephants.

After all, Mrs. Ferrars was right. There is nothing more remarkable in political history than the sudden break-up of the Whig party after their successful revolution of 1832. It is one of the most striking instances on record of all the elements of political power being useless without a commanding individual will. During the second year of their exile in the Berkshire hills, affairs looked so black that it seemed no change could occur except further and more calamitous revolution. Zenobia went to Vienna that she might breathe the atmosphere of law and order, and hinted to Mrs. Ferrars that probably she should never return — at least not until Parliament met, when she trusted the House of Lords, if they were not abolished in the interval, would save the country. And yet at the commencement of the following year an old colleague of Mr. Ferrars apprised him, in the darkest and the deepest confidence, that there was 'a screw loose,' and he must 'look out for squalls.'

In the meantime Mr. Ferrars increased and established his claims on his party, if they ever did rally, by his masterly articles in their great *Review*, which circumstances favoured, and which kept up that increasing feeling of terror and despair which then was deemed necessary to the advancement of Conservative opinions.

At home a year and more had elapsed without change. The occasional appearance of Nigel Penruddock was the only event. It was to all a pleasing,

and to some of the family a deeply interesting, one. Nigel, though a student and devoted to the holy profession for which he was destined, was also a sportsman. His Christianity was muscular, and Endymion, to whom he had taken a fancy, became the companion of his pastimes. All the shooting of the estate was at Nigel's command, but as there were no keepers, it was of course very rough work. Still it was a novel and animating life for Endymion; and though the sport was slight, the pursuit was keen. Then Nigel was a great fisherman, and here their efforts had a surer return, for they dwelt in a land of trout streams, and in their vicinity was a not inconsiderable river. It was an adventure of delight to pursue some of these streams to their source, throwing, as they rambled on, the fly in the rippling waters. Myra, too, took some pleasure in these fishing expeditions, carrying their luncheon and a German book in her wallet, and sitting quietly on the bank for hours, when they had fixed upon some favoured pool for a prolonged campaign.

Every time that Nigel returned home, a difference, and a striking difference, was observed in him. His person, of course, became more manly, his manner more assured, his dress more modish. It was impossible to deny that he was extremely good-looking, interesting in his discourse, and distinguished in his appearance. Endymion idolised him. Nigel was his model. He imitated his manner, caught the tone of his voice, and began to give opinions on subjects, sacred and profane.

After a hard morning's march, one day, as they were lolling on the turf amid the old beeches and the juniper, Nigel said—

'What does Mr. Ferrars mean you to be, Endymion?'

'I do not know,' said Endymion, looking perplexed.

'But I suppose you are to be something?'

'Yes; I suppose I must be something; because papa has lost his fortune.'

'And what would you like to be?'

'I never thought about it,' said Endymion.

'In my opinion there is only one thing for a man to be in this age,' said Nigel peremptorily; 'he should go into the Church.'

'The Church!' said Endymion.

'There will soon be nothing else left,' said Nigel. 'The Church must last forever. It is built upon a rock. It was founded by God; all other governments have been founded by men. When they are destroyed, and the process of destruction seems rapid, there will be nothing left to govern mankind except the Church.'

'Indeed!' said Endymion; 'papa is very much in favour of the Church, and, I know, is writing something about it.'

'Yes, but Mr. Ferrars is an Erastian,' said Nigel; 'you need not tell him I said so, but he is one. He wants the Church to be the servant of the State, and all that sort or thing, but that will not do any longer. This destruction of the Irish bishoprics has brought affairs to a crisis. No human power has the right to destroy a bishopric. It is a divinely-ordained office, and when a diocese is once established, it is eternal.'

'I see,' said Endymion, much interested.

'I wish,' continued Nigel, 'you were two or three years older, and Mr. Ferrars could send you to Oxford. That is the place to understand these things, and they will soon be the only things to understand.

The rector knows nothing about them. My father is thoroughly high and dry, and has not the slightest idea of Church principles.'

'Indeed!' said Endymion.

'It is quite a new set even at Oxford,' continued Nigel; 'but their principles are as old as the Apostles, and come down from them, straight.'

'That is a long time ago,' said Endymion.

'I have a great fancy,' continued Nigel, without apparently attending to him, 'to give you a thorough Church education. It would be the making of you. You would then have a purpose in life, and never be in doubt or perplexity on any subject. We ought to move heaven and earth to induce Mr. Ferrars to send you to Oxford.'

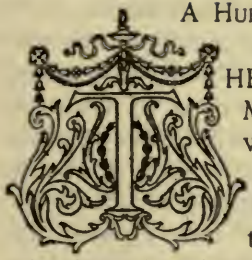
'I will speak to Myra about it,' said Endymion.

'I said something of this to your sister the other day,' said Nigel, 'but I fear she is terribly Erastian. However, I will give you something to read. It is not very long, but you can read it at your leisure, and then we will talk over it afterwards, and perhaps I may give you something else.'

Endymion did not fail to give a report of this conversation and similar ones to his sister, for he was in the habit of telling her everything. She listened with attention, but not with interest, to his story. Her expression was kind, but hardly serious. Her wondrous eyes gave him a glance of blended mockery and affection. 'Dear darling,' she said, 'if you are to be a clergyman, I should like you to be a cardinal.'

CHAPTER XV.

A Hurried Trip to Town.



HE dark deep hints that had reached Mr. Ferrars at the beginning of 1834 were the harbingers of startling events. In the spring it began to be rumoured among the initiated, that the mighty Reform Cabinet, with its colossal majority, and its testimonial goblets of gold, raised by the penny subscriptions of a grateful people, was in convulsions, and before the month of July had elapsed Lord Grey had resigned, under circumstances which exhibited the entire demoralisation of his party. Except Zenobia, every one was of opinion that the King acted wisely in entrusting the reconstruction of the Whig ministry to his late Secretary of State, Lord Melbourne. Nevertheless, it could no longer be concealed, nay, it was invariably admitted, that the political situation had been largely and most unexpectedly changed, and that there was a prospect, dim, perhaps, yet not undefinable, of the conduct of public affairs again falling to the alternate management of two rival constitutional parties.

Zenobia was so full of hope, and almost of triumph, that she induced her lord in the autumn to

assemble their political friends at one of his great seats, and Mr. and Mrs. Ferrars were urgently invited to join the party. But, after some hesitation, they declined this proposal. Had Mr. Ferrars been as sanguine as his wife, he would perhaps have overcome his strong disinclination to re-enter the world, but though no longer despairing of a Tory revival, he was of opinion that a considerable period, even several years, must elapse before its occurrence. Strange to say, he found no difficulty in following his own humour through any contrary disposition on the part of Mrs. Ferrars. With all her ambition and passionate love of society, she was unwilling to return to that stage where she once had blazed, in a subdued and almost subordinate position. In fact, it was an affair of the wardrobe. The queen of costumes, whose fanciful and gorgeous attire even Zenobia was wont to praise, could not endure a reappearance in old dresses. 'I do not so much care about my jewels, William,' she said to her husband, 'but one must have new dresses.'

It was a still, mild day in November, a month which in the country, and especially on the light soils, has many charms, and the whole Ferrars family were returning home after an afternoon ramble on the chase. The leaf had changed but had not fallen, and the vast spiral masses of the dark green juniper effectively contrasted with the rich brown foliage of the beech, varied occasionally by the scarlet leaves of the wild cherry tree, that always mingles with these woods. Around the house were some lime trees of large size, and at this period of the year their foliage, still perfect, was literally quite golden. They seemed like trees in some fairy tale of imprisoned princesses

or wandering cavaliers, and such they would remain, until the fatal night that should bring the first frost.

'There is a parcel from London,' said the servant to Mr. Ferrars, as they entered the house. 'It is on your desk.'

A parcel from London was one of the great events of their life. What could it be? Perhaps some proofs, probably some books. Mr. Ferrars entered his room alone. It was a very small brown paper parcel, evidently not books. He opened it hastily, and disencumbered its contents of several coverings. The contents took the form of a letter — a single letter.

The handwriting was recognised, and he read the letter with an agitated countenance, and then he opened the door of his room, and called loudly for his wife, who was by his side in a few moments.

'A letter, my love, from Barron,' he cried. 'The King has dismissed Lord Melbourne and sent for the Duke of Wellington, who has accepted the conduct of affairs.'

'You must go to town directly,' said his wife. 'He offered you the cabinet in 1832. No person has such a strong claim on him as you have.'

'It does not appear that he is exactly Prime Minister,' said Mr. Ferrars, looking again at the letter. 'They have sent for Peel, who is at Rome, but the Duke is to conduct the government till he arrives.'

'You must go to town immediately,' repeated Mrs. Ferrars. 'There is not a moment to be lost. Send down to the Horse Shoe and secure an inside place in the Salisbury coach. It reaches this place at nine to-morrow morning. I will have everything ready. You must take a portmanteau and a carpet-

bag. I wonder if you could get a bedroom at the Rodneys'. It would be so nice to be among old friends; they must feel for you. And then it will be near the Carlton, which is a great thing. I wonder how he will form his cabinet. What a pity he is not here!'

'It is a wonderful event, but the difficulties must be immense,' observed Ferrars.

'Oh! you always see difficulties. I see none. The King is with us, the country is disgusted. It is what I always said would be; the reaction is complete.'

'Well, we had better now go and tell the children,' said Ferrars. 'I leave you all here for the first time,' and he seemed to sigh.

'Well, I hope we shall soon join you,' said Mrs. Ferrars. 'It is the very best time for hiring a house. What I have set my heart upon is the Green Park. It will be near your office and not too near. I am sure I could not live again in a street.'

The children were informed that public events of importance had occurred, that the King had changed his ministry, and that papa must go up to town immediately and see the Duke of Wellington. The eyes of Mrs. Ferrars danced with excitement as she communicated to them all this intelligence, and much more, with a volubility in which of late years she had rarely indulged. Mr. Ferrars looked grave and said little. Then he patted Endymion on the head, and kissed Myra, who returned his embrace with a warmth unusual with her.

The whole household soon became in a state of bustle with the preparations for the early departure of Mr. Ferrars. It seemed difficult to comprehend how

filling a portmanteau and a carpet-bag could induce such excited and continuous exertions. But then there was so much to remember, and then there was always something forgotten. Mrs. Ferrars was in her bedroom surrounded by all her maids; Mr. Ferrars was in his study looking out some papers which it was necessary to take with him. The children were alone.

'I wonder if we shall be restored to our greatness,' said Myra to Endymion.

'Well, I shall be sorry to leave the old place; I have been happy here.'

'I have not,' said Myra; 'and I do not think I could have borne this life had it not been for you.'

'It will be a wonderful change,' said Endymion.

'If it come; I fear papa is not daring enough. However, if we get out of this hole, it will be something.'

Tea-time brought them all together again, but when the meal was over, none of the usual occupations of the evening were pursued; no work, no books, no reading aloud. Mr. Ferrars was to get up very early, and that was a reason for all retiring soon. And yet neither the husband nor the wife really cared to sleep. Mrs. Ferrars sat by the fire in his dressing-room, speculating on all possible combinations, and infusing into him all her suggestions and all her schemes. She was still prudent, and still would have preferred a great government — India if possible; but had made up her mind that he must accept the cabinet. Considering what had occurred in 1832, she thought he was bound in honour to do so. Her husband listened rather than conversed, and seemed lost in thought. At last he rose,

and, embracing her with much affection, said, 'You forget I am to rise with the lark. I shall write to you every day. Best and dearest of women, you have always been right, and all my good fortune has come from you.'

CHAPTER XVI.

Humble Friends.

IT WAS a very tedious journey, and it took the whole day to accomplish a distance which a rapid express train now can achieve in an hour. The coach carried six inside passengers, and they had to dine on the road. All the passengers were strangers to Mr. Ferrars, and he was by them unknown; one of them purchased, though with difficulty, a second edition of the *Times* as they approached London, and favoured his fellow-travellers with the news of the change of ministry. There was much excitement, and the purchaser of the paper gave it as his opinion, 'that it was an intrigue of the Court and the Tories, and would never do.' Another modestly intimated that he thought there was a decided reaction. A third announced that England would never submit to be governed by O'Connell.

As the gloom of evening descended, Mr. Ferrars felt depressed. Though his life at Hurstley had been pensive and melancholy, he felt now the charm and the want of that sweet domestic distraction which had often prevented his mind from overbrooding, and had

softened life by sympathy in little things. Nor was it without emotion that he found himself again in London, that proud city where once he had himself been so proud. The streets were lighted, and seemed swarming with an infinite population, and the coach finally stopped at a great inn in the Strand, where Mr. Ferrars thought it prudent to secure accommodation for the night. It was too late to look after the Rodneys, but in deference to the strict injunction of Mrs. Ferrars, he paid them a visit next morning on his way to his political chief.

In the days of the great modistes, when an English lady might absolutely be dressed in London, the most celebrated mantua-maker in that city was Madame Euphrosyne. She was as fascinating as she was fashionable. She was so graceful, her manners were so pretty, so natural, and so insinuating! She took so lively an interest in her clients — her very heart was in their good looks. She was a great favourite of Mrs. Ferrars, and that lady of Madame Euphrosyne. She assured Mrs. Ferrars that she was prouder of dressing Mrs. Ferrars than all the other fine ladies in London together, and Mrs. Ferrars believed her. Unfortunately, while in the way of making a large fortune, Madame Euphrosyne, who was romantic, fell in love with, and married, a very handsome and worthless husband, whose good looks had obtained for him a position in the company of Drury Lane Theatre, then a place of refined resort, which his abilities did not justify. After pillaging and plundering his wife for many years, he finally involved her in such engagements that she had to take refuge in the Bankruptcy Court. Her business was ruined, and her spirit was broken, and she died shortly after of adversity and

chagrin. Her daughter Sylvia was then eighteen, and had inherited with the grace of her mother the beauty of her less reputable parent. Her figure was slight and undulating, and she was always exquisitely dressed. A brilliant complexion set off to advantage her delicate features, which, though serene, were not devoid of a certain expression of archness. Her white hands were delicate, her light eyes inclined to merriment, and her nose quite a gem, though a little turned up.

After their ruin, her profligate father told her that her face was her fortune, and that she must provide for herself, in which she would find no difficulty. But Sylvia, though she had never enjoyed the advantage of any training, moral or religious, had no bad impulses even if she had no good ones, was of a rather cold character, and extremely prudent. She recoiled from the life of riot, and disorder, and irregularity, in which she had unwittingly passed her days, and which had terminated so tragically, and she resolved to make an effort to secure for herself a different career. She had heard that Mrs. Ferrars was in want of an attendant, and she determined to apply for the post. As one of the chief customers of her mother, Sylvia had been in the frequent habit of waiting on that lady, with whom she had become a favourite. She was so pretty, and the only person who could fit Mrs. Ferrars. Her appeal, therefore, was not in vain; it was more than successful. Mrs. Ferrars was attracted by Sylvia. Mrs. Ferrars was magnificent, generous, and she liked to be a patroness and to be surrounded by favourites. She determined that Sylvia should not sink into a menial position; she adopted her as a humble friend, and one who every day be-

came more regarded by her. Sylvia arranged her invitations to her receptions, a task which required finish and precision; sometimes wrote her notes. She spoke and wrote French, too, and that was useful, was a musician, and had a pretty voice. Above all, she was a firstrate counsellor in costume; and so, looking also after Mrs. Ferrars' dogs and birds, she became almost one of the family; dined with them often when they were alone, and was frequently Mrs. Ferrars' companion in her carriage.

Sylvia, though not by nature impulsive, really adored her patroness. She governed her manners and she modelled her dress on that great original, and, next to Mrs. Ferrars, Sylvia in time became nearly the finest lady in London. There was, indeed, much in Mrs. Ferrars to captivate a person like Sylvia. Mrs. Ferrars was beautiful, fashionable, gorgeous, wonderfully expensive, and, where her taste was pleased, profusely generous. Her winning manner was not less irresistible because it was sometimes uncertain, and she had the art of being intimate without being familiar.

When the crash came, Sylvia was really broken-hearted, or believed she was, and implored that she might attend the deposed sovereigns into exile; but that was impossible, however anxious they might be as to the future of their favourite. Her destiny was sooner decided than they could have anticipated. There was a member of the household, or rather family, in Hill Street, who bore almost the same relation to Mr. Ferrars as Sylvia to his wife. This was Mr. Rodney, a remarkably good-looking person, by nature really a little resembling his principal, and completing the resemblance by consummate art. The

courtiers of Alexander of Macedon could not study their chief with more devotion, or more sedulously imitate his mien and carriage, than did Mr. Rodney that distinguished individual of whom he was the humble friend, and who he was convinced was destined to be Prime Minister of England.

Mr. Rodney was the only son of the office-keeper of old Mr. Ferrars, and it was the ambition of the father that his son, for whom he had secured a sound education, should become a member of the civil service. It had become an apothegm in the Ferrars family that something must be done for Rodney, and whenever the apparent occasion failed, which was not unfrequent, old Mr. Ferrars used always to add, 'Never mind; so long as I live, Rodney shall never want a home.' The object of all this kindness, however, was little distressed by their failures in his preferment. He had implicit faith in the career of his friend and master, and looked forward to the time when it might not be impossible that he himself might find a haven in a commissionership. Recently Mr. Ferrars had been able to confer on him a small post with duties not too engrossing, and which did not prevent his regular presence in Hill Street, where he made himself generally useful.

If there were anything confidential to be accomplished in their domestic life, everything might be trusted to his discretion and entire devotion. He supervised the establishment without injudiciously interfering with the house-steward, copied secret papers for Mr. Ferrars, and when that gentleman was out of office acted as his private secretary. Mr. Rodney was the most official personage in the ministerial circle. He considered human nature only with refer-

ence to office. No one was so intimately acquainted with all the details of the lesser patronage as himself, and his hours of study were passed in the pages of the 'Peerage' and in penetrating the mysteries of the 'Royal Calendar.'

The events of 1832, therefore, to this gentleman were scarcely a less severe blow than to the Ferrars family itself. Indeed, like his chief, he looked upon himself as the victim of a revolution. Mr. Rodney had always been an admirer of Sylvia, but no more. He had accompanied her to the theatre, and had attended her to the park, but this was quite understood on both sides only to be gallantry; both, perhaps, in their prosperity, with respect to the serious step of life, had indulged in higher dreams. But the sympathy of sorrow is stronger than the sympathy of prosperity. In the darkness of their lives, each required comfort: he murmured some accents of tender solace, and Sylvia agreed to become Mrs. Rodney.

When they considered their position, the prospect was not free from anxiety. To marry and then separate is, where there is affection, trying. His income would secure them little more than a roof, but how to live under that roof was a mystery. For her to become a governess, and for him to become a secretary, and to meet only on an occasional Sunday, was a sorry lot. And yet both possessed accomplishments or acquirements which ought in some degree to be productive. Rodney had a friend, and he determined to consult him.

That friend was no common person; he was Mr. Vigo, by birth a Yorkshireman, and gifted with all the attributes, physical and intellectual, of that celebrated race. At present he was the most fashionable

tailor in London, and one whom many persons consulted. Besides being consummate in his art, Mr. Vigo had the reputation of being a man of singularly good judgment. He was one who obtained influence over all with whom he came in contact, and as his business placed him in contact with various classes, but especially with the class socially most distinguished, his influence was great. The golden youth who repaired to his counters came there not merely to obtain raiment of the best material and the most perfect cut, but to see and talk with Mr. Vigo, and to ask his opinion on various points. There was a spacious room where, if they liked, they might smoke a cigar, and 'Vigo's cigars' were something which no one could rival. If they liked to take a glass of hock with their tobacco, there was a bottle ready from the cellars of Johannisberg. Mr. Vigo's stable was almost as famous as its master; he drove the finest horses in London, and rode the best hunters in the Vale of Aylesbury. With all this, his manners were exactly what they should be. He was neither pretentious nor servile, but simple, and with becoming respect for others and for himself. He never took a liberty with any one, and such treatment, as is generally the case, was reciprocal.

Mr. Vigo was much attached to Mr. Rodney, and was proud of his intimate acquaintance with him. He wanted a friend not of his own order, for that would not increase or improve his ideas, but one conversant with the habits and feelings of a superior class, and yet he did not want a fine gentleman for an intimate, who would have been either an insolent patron or a designing parasite. Rodney had relations with the aristocracy, with the political world, and could feel

the pulse of public life. His appearance was engaging, his manners gentle if not gentlemanlike, and he had a temper never disturbed. This is a quality highly appreciated by men of energy and fire, who may happen not to have a complete self-control.

When Rodney detailed to his friend the catastrophe that had occurred and all its sad consequences, Mr. Vigo heard him in silence, occasionally nodding his head in sympathy or approbation, or scrutinising a statement with his keen hazel eye. When his visitor had finished, he said—

'When there has been a crash, there is nothing like a change of scene. I propose that you and Mrs. Rodney should come and stay with me a week at my house at Barnes, and there a good many things may occur to us.'

And so, towards the end of the week, when the Rodneys had exhausted their whole programme of projects, against every one of which there seemed some invincible objection, their host said, 'You know I rather speculate in houses. I bought one last year in Warwick Street. It is a large roomy house in a quiet situation, though in a bustling quarter, just where members of Parliament would like to lodge. I have put it in thorough repair. What I propose is that you should live there, let the first and second floors—they are equally good—and live on the ground floor yourselves, which is amply convenient. We will not talk about rent till the year is over and we see how it answers. The house is unfurnished, but that is nothing. I will introduce you to a friend of mine who will furnish it for you solidly and handsomely, you paying a percentage on the amount expended. He will want a guaranty, but of course

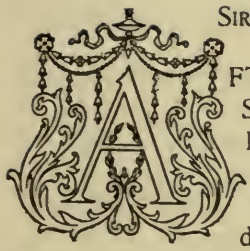
I will be that. It is an experiment, but try it. Try it for a year; at any rate, you will be a householder, and you will have the opportunity of thinking of something else.'

Hitherto the Rodneys had been successful in their enterprise, and the soundness of Mr. Vigo's advice had been proved. Their house was full, and of the best tenants. Their first floor was taken by a distinguished M.P., a county member of repute whom Mr. Rodney had known before the 'revolution,' and who was so pleased with his quarters, and the comfort and refinement of all about him, that to ensure their constant enjoyment he became a yearly tenant. Their second floor, which was nearly as good as their first, was inhabited by a young gentleman of fashion, who took them originally only by the week, and who was always going to give them up, but never did. The weekly lodger went to Paris, and he went to German baths, and he went to country houses, and he was frequently a long time away, but he never gave up his lodgings. When, therefore, Mr. Ferrars called in Warwick Street, the truth is the house was full and there was no vacant room for him. But this the Rodneys would not admit. Though they were worldly people, and it seemed impossible that anything more could be gained from the ruined house of Hurstley, they had, like many other people, a superstition, and their superstition was an adoration of the family of Ferrars. The sight of their former master, who, had it not been for the revolution, might have been Prime Minister of England, and the recollection of their former mistress and all her splendour, and all the rich dresses which she used to give so profusely to her dependent, quite overwhelmed them. Without con-

sultation this sympathising couple leaped to the same conclusion. They assured Mr. Ferrars they could accommodate him, and that he should find everything prepared for him when he called again, and they resigned to him, without acknowledging it, their own commodious and well-furnished chamber, which Mrs. Rodney prepared for him with the utmost solicitude, arranging his writing-table and materials as he used to have them in Hill Street, and showing by a variety of modes she remembered all his ways.

CHAPTER XVII.

Sir Robert Arrives.



FTER securing his room in Warwick Street, Mr. Ferrars called on his political chiefs. Though engrossed with affairs, the moment his card was exhibited he was seen, cordially welcomed, and addressed in confidence. Not only were his claims acknowledged without being preferred, but an evidently earnest hope was expressed that they might be fully satisfied. No one had suffered more for the party and no one had worked harder or more effectively for it. But at present nothing could be done and nothing more could be said. All depended on Peel. Until he arrived nothing could be arranged. Their duties were limited to provisionally administering the affairs of the country until his appearance.

It was many days, even weeks, before that event could happen. The messenger would travel to Rome night and day, but it was calculated that nearly three weeks must elapse before his return. Mr. Ferrars then went to the Carlton Club, which he had assisted in forming three or four years before, and had established in a house of modern dimensions in Charles Street, St. James. It was called then the Charles Street gang,

and none but the thoroughgoing cared to belong to it. Now he found it flourishing in a magnificent mansion on Carlton Terrace, while in very sight of its windows, on a plot of ground in Pall Mall, a palace was rising to receive it. It counted already fifteen hundred members, who had been selected by an omniscient and scrutinising committee, solely with reference to their local influence throughout the country, and the books were overflowing with impatient candidates of rank, and wealth, and power.

Three years ago Ferrars had been one of the leading spirits of this great confederacy, and now he entered the superb chamber, and it seemed to him that he did not recognise a human being. Yet it was full to overflowing, and excitement and anxiety and bustle were impressed on every countenance. If he had heard some of the whispers and remarks, as he entered and moved about, his self-complacency would scarcely have been gratified.

'Who is that?' inquired a young M.P. of a brother senator not much more experienced.

'Have not the remotest idea; never saw him before. Barron is speaking to him; he will tell us. I say, Barron, who is your friend?'

'That is Ferrars!'

'Ferrars! who is he?'

'One of our best men. If all our fellows had fought like him against the Reform Bill, that infernal measure would never have been carried.'

'Oh! ah! I remember something now,' said the young M.P. 'but anything that happened before the election of '32 I look upon as an old almanack.'

However, notwithstanding the first and painful impression of strangers, and strangeness, when a little

time had elapsed Ferrars found many friends, and among the most distinguished present. Nothing could be more hearty than their greeting, and he had not been in the room half an hour before he had accepted an invitation to dine that very day with Lord Pomeroy.

It was a large and rather miscellaneous party, but all of the right kidney. Some men who had been cabinet ministers, and some who expected to be; several occupiers in old days of the secondary offices; both the whips, one noisy and the other mysterious; several lawyers of repute who must be brought into Parliament, and some young men who had distinguished themselves in the reformed house and whom Ferrars had never seen before. 'It is like old days,' said the husband of Zenobia to Ferrars, who sat next to him; 'I hope it will float, but we shall know nothing till Peel comes.'

'He will have difficulty with his cabinet so far as the House of Commons is concerned,' said an old privy councillor. 'They must have seats, and his choice is very limited.'

'He will dissolve,' said the husband of Zenobia. 'He must.'

'Wheugh!' said the privy councillor, and he shrugged his shoulders.

'The old story will not do,' said the husband of Zenobia. 'We must have new blood. Peel must reconstruct on a broad basis.'

'Well, they say there is no lack of converts,' said the old privy councillor.

All this and much more that he heard, made Ferrars ponder, and anxiously. No cabinet without Parliament. It was but reasonable. A dissolution

was therefore in his interest. And yet, what a prospect! A considerable expenditure, and yet with a considerable expenditure a doubtful result. Then reconstruction on a broad basis — what did that mean? Neither more nor less than rival candidates for office. There was no lack of converts. He dared say not. A great deal had developed since his exile at Hurstley — things which are not learned by newspapers, or even private correspondence. He spoke to Barron after dinner. He had reason to believe Barron was his friend. Barron could give no opinion about dissolution; all depended on Peel. But they were acting, and had been acting for some time, as if a dissolution were on the cards. Ferrars had better call upon him to-morrow, and go over the list, and see what could be done for him. He had every claim.

The man with every claim called on Barron on the morrow, and saw his secret list, and listened to all his secret prospects and secret plans. There was more than one manufacturing town where there was an opening; decided reaction, and a genuine Conservative feeling. Barron had no doubt that, although a man might not get in the first time he stood, he would ultimately. Ultimately was not a word which suited Mr. Ferrars. There were several old boroughs when the freemen still outnumbered the ten-pounders, and when the prospects were more encouraging; but the expense was equal to the goodness of the chance, and although Ferrars had every claim, and would no doubt be assisted, still one could not shut one's eyes to the fact that the personal expenditure must be considerable. The agricultural boroughs must be fought, at least this time, by local men. Something might be done with an Irish borough; ex-

pense, comparatively speaking inconsiderable, but the politics deeply Orange.

Gloom settled on the countenance of this spoiled child of politics, who had always sat for a close borough, and who recoiled from a contest like a woman, when he pictured to himself the struggle and exertion and personal suffering he would have to encounter and endure, and then with no certainty of success. The trained statesman, who had anticipated the mass of his party on Catholic emancipation, to become an Orange candidate! It was worse than making speeches to ten-pounders and canvassing freemen!

'I knew things were difficult,' said Ferrars; 'but I was in hopes that there were yet some seats that we might command.'

'No doubt there are,' said Mr. Barron; 'but they are few, and they are occupied—at least at present. But, after all, a thousand things may turn up, and you may consider nothing definitively arranged till Sir Robert arrives. The great thing is to be on the spot.'

Ferrars wrote to his wife daily, and kept her minutely acquainted with the course of affairs. She agreed with Barron that the great thing was to be on the spot. She felt sure that something would turn up. She was convinced that Sir Robert would send for him, offer him the cabinet, and at the same time provide him with a seat. Her own inclination was still in favour of a great colonial or foreign appointment. She still hankered after India; but if the cabinet were offered, as was certain, she did not consider that William, as a man of honour, could refuse to accept the trust and share the peril.

So Ferrars remained in London under the roof of the Rodneys. The feverish days passed in the excitement of political life in all its manifold forms, grave council and light gossip, dinners with only one subject of conversation, and that never palling, and at last, even evenings spent again under the roof of Zenobia, who, the instant her winter apartments were ready to receive the world, had hurried up to London and raised her standard in St. James' Square. 'It was like old days,' as her husband had said to Ferrars when they met after a long separation.

Was it like old days? he thought to himself when he was alone. Old days, when the present had no care, and the future was all hope; when he was proud, and justly proud, of the public position he had achieved, and of all the splendid and felicitous circumstances of life that had clustered round him. He thought of those away, and with whom during the last three years he had so continuously and intimately lived. And his hired home that once had been associated only in his mind with exile, imprisonment, misfortune, almost disgrace, became hallowed by affection, and in the agony of the suspense which now involved him, and to encounter which he began to think his diminished nerve unequal, he would have bargained for the rest of his life to pass undisturbed in that sweet solitude, in the delights of study and the tranquillity of domestic love.

A little not unamiable weakness this, but it passed off in the morning like a dream, when Mr. Ferrars heard that Sir Robert had arrived.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Disappointment.

IT WAS a dark December night when Mr. Ferrars returned to Hurstley. His wife, accompanied by the gardener with a lantern, met him on the green. She embraced him, and whispered, 'Is it very bad, love? I fear you have softened it to me?'

'By no means bad, and I told you the truth: not all, for had I, my letter would have been too late. He said nothing about the cabinet, but offered me a high post in his government, provided I could secure my seat. That was impossible. During the month I was in town I had realised that. I thought it best, therefore, at once to try the other tack, and nothing could be more satisfactory.'

'Did you say anything about India?' she said in a very low voice.

'I did not. He is an honourable man, but he is cold, and my manner is not distinguished for *abandon*. I thought it best to speak generally, and leave it to him. He acknowledged my claim, and my fitness for such posts, and said if his government lasted it would gratify him to meet my wishes. Barron says

the government will last. They will have a majority, and if Stanley and Graham had joined them, they would have had not an inconsiderable one. But in that case I should probably not have had the cabinet, if indeed he meant to offer it to me now.'

'Of course he did,' said his wife. 'Who has such claims as you have? Well, now we must hope and watch. Look cheerful to the children, for they have been very anxious.'

With this hint the meeting was not unhappy, and the evening passed with amusement and interest. Endymion embraced his father with warmth, and Myra kissed him on both cheeks. Mr. Ferrars had a great deal of gossip which interested his wife, and to a certain degree his children. The latter of course remembered Zenobia, and her sayings and doings were always amusing. There were anecdotes, too, of illustrious persons which always interest, especially when in the personal experience of those with whom we are intimately connected. What the Duke, or Sir Robert, or Lord Lyndhurst said to papa seemed doubly wiser or brighter than if it had been said to a third person. Their relations with the world of power, and fashion, and fame, seemed not to be extinct, at last reviving from their torpid condition. Mr. Ferrars had also brought a German book for Myra; and 'as for you, Endymion,' he said, 'I have been much more successful for you than for your father, though I hope I shall not have myself in the long run to complain. Our friends are faithful to us, and I have got you put down on the private list for a clerkship both in the Foreign Office and the Treasury. They are the two best things, and you will have one of the first vacancies that will occur in either department. I know

your mother wishes you to be in the Foreign Office. Let it be so if it come. I confess, myself, remembering your grandfather's career, I have always a weakness for the Treasury, but so long as I see you well planted in Whitehall, I shall be content. Let me see, you will be sixteen in March. I could have wished you to wait another year, but we must be ready when the opening occurs.'

The general election in 1834–5, though it restored the balance of parties, did not secure to Sir Robert Peel a majority, and the anxiety of the family at Hurstley was proportionate to the occasion. Barron was always sanguine, but the vote on the Speakership could not but alarm them. Barron said it did not signify, and that Sir Robert had resolved to go on and had confidence in his measures. His measures were excellent, and Sir Robert never displayed more resource, more energy, and more skill, than he did in the spring of 1835. But knowledge of human nature was not Sir Robert Peel's strong point, and it argued some deficiency in that respect to suppose that the fitness of his measures could disarm a vindictive opposition. On the contrary, they rather whetted their desire of revenge, and they were doubly loth that he should increase his reputation by availing himself of an opportunity which they deemed the Tory party had unfairly acquired.

After the vote on the Speakership, Mr. Ferrars was offered a second-class West Indian government. His wife would not listen to it. If it were Jamaica, the offer might be considered, though it could scarcely be accepted without great sacrifice. The children, for instance, must be left at home. Strange to say, Mr. Ferrars was not disinclined to accept the inferior post.

Endymion he looked upon as virtually provided for, and Myra, he thought, might accompany them; if only for a year. But he ultimately yielded, though not without a struggle, to the strong feeling of his wife.

'I do not see why I also should not be left behind,' said Myra to her brother in one of their confidential walks. 'I should like to live in London in lodgings with you.'

The approaching appointment of her brother filled her from the first with the greatest interest. She was always talking of it when they were alone—fancying his future life, and planning how it might be happier and more easy. 'My only joy in life is seeing you,' she sometimes said, 'and yet this separation does not make me unhappy. It seems a chance from heaven for you. I pray every night it may be the Foreign Office.'

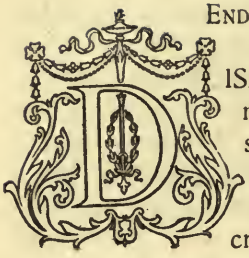
The ministry were still sanguine as to their prospects in the month of March, and they deemed that public opinion was rallying round Sir Robert. Perhaps Lord John Russell, who was the leader of the opposition, felt this, in some degree, himself, and he determined to bring affairs to a crisis by notice of a motion respecting the appropriation of the revenues of the Irish Church. Then Barron wrote to Mr. Ferrars that affairs did not look so well, and advised him to come up to town, and take anything that offered. 'It is something,' he remarked, 'to have something to give up. We shall not, I suppose, always be out of office, and they get preferred more easily whose promotion contributes to patronage, even while they claim its exercise.'

The ministry were in a minority on the Irish Church on April 2, the day on which Mr. Ferrars arrived in

town. They did not resign, but the attack was to be repeated in another form on the 6th. During the terrible interval Mr. Ferrars made distracted visits to Downing Street, saw secretaries of state, who sympathised with him notwithstanding their own chagrin, and was closeted daily and hourly with under-secretaries, parliamentary and permanent, who really alike wished to serve him. But there was nothing to be had. He was almost meditating taking Sierra Leone, or the Gold Coast, when the resignation of Sir Robert Peel was announced. At the last moment, there being, of course, no vacancy in the Foreign Office, or the Treasury, he obtained from Barron an appointment for Endymion, and so, after having left Hurstley five months before to become Governor-General of India, this man, 'who had claims,' returned to his mortified home with a clerkship for his son in a second-rate government office.

CHAPTER XIX.

Endymion's Prospects.



ISAPPOINTMENT and distress, it might be said despair, seemed fast settling again over the devoted roof of Hurstley, after a three years' truce of tranquillity. Even the crushing termination of her worldly hopes was forgotten for the moment by Mrs. Ferrars in her anguish at the prospect of separation from Endymion. Such a catastrophe she had never for a moment contemplated. True it was she had been delighted with the scheme of his entering the Foreign Office, but that was on the assumption that she was to enter office herself, and that, whatever might be the scene of the daily labours of her darling child, her roof should be his home, and her indulgent care always at his command. But that she was absolutely to part with Endymion, and that, at his tender age, he was to be launched alone into the wide world, was an idea that she could not entertain, or even comprehend. Who was to clothe him, and feed him, and tend him, and save him from being run over, and guide and guard him in all the difficulties and dangers of this mundane existence? It was madness, it was impossible. But

Mr. Ferrars, though gentle, was firm. No doubt it was to be wished that the event could have been postponed for a year; but its occurrence, unless all prospect of establishment in life were surrendered, was inevitable, and a slight delay would hardly render the conditions under which it happened less trying. Though Endymion was only sixteen, he was tall and manly beyond his age, and during the latter years of his life, his naturally sweet temper and genial disposition had been schooled in self-discipline and self-sacrifice. He was not to be wholly left to strangers; Mr. Ferrars had spoken to Rodney about receiving him, at least for the present, and steps would be taken that those who presided over his office would be influenced in his favour. The appointment was certainly not equal to what had been originally anticipated; but still the department, though not distinguished, was highly respectable, and there was no reason on earth, if the opportunity offered, that Endymion should not be removed from his present post to one in the higher departments of the state. But if this opening were rejected, what was to be the future of their son? They could not afford to send him to the University, nor did Mr. Ferrars wish him to take refuge in the bosom of the Church. As for the army, they had now no interest to acquire commissions, and if they could succeed so far, they could not make him an allowance which would permit him to maintain himself as became his rank. The civil service remained, in which his grandfather had been eminent, and in which his own parent, at any rate, though the victim of a revolution, had not disgraced himself. It seemed, under the circumstances, the natural avenue for their child. At least, he thought it ought to be

tried. He wished nothing to be settled without the full concurrence of Endymion himself. The matter should be put fairly and clearly before him, 'and for this purpose,' concluded Mr. Ferrars, 'I have just sent for him to my room;' and he retired.

The interview between the father and son was long. When Endymion left the room his countenance was pale, but its expression was firm and determined. He went forth into the garden, and there he saw Myra. 'How long you have been!' she said; 'I have been watching for you. What is settled?'

He took her arm, and in silence led her away into one of the glades. Then he said: 'I have settled to go, and I am resolved, so long as I live, that I will never cost dear papa another shilling. Things here are very bad, quite as bad as you have sometimes fancied. But do not say anything to poor mamma about them.'

Mr. Ferrars resolved that Endymion should go to London immediately, and the preparations for his departure were urgent. Myra did everything. If she had been the head of a family she could not have been more thoughtful or apparently more experienced. If she had a doubt, she stepped over to Mrs. Penruddock and consulted her. As for Mrs. Ferrars, she had become very unwell, and unable to attend to anything. Her occasional interference, fitful and feverish, and without adequate regard to circumstances, only embarrassed them. But, generally speaking, she kept to her own room, and was always weeping.

The last day came. No one pretended not to be serious and grave. Mrs. Ferrars did not appear, but saw Endymion alone. She did not speak, but locked him in her arms for many minutes, and then kissing

AFTER AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY GEORGE ALFRED WILLIAMS.

He took her arm, and in silence led her away into one of the glades.

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him on the forehead, and, by a gentle motion, intimating that he should retire, she fell back on her sofa with closed eyes. He was alone for a short time with his father after dinner. Mr. Ferrars said to him: 'I have treated you in this matter as a man, and I have entire confidence in you. Your business in life is to build up again a family which was once honoured.'

Myra was still copying inventories when he returned to the drawing-room. 'These are for myself,' she said, 'so I shall always know what you ought to have. Though you go so early, I shall make your breakfast to-morrow,' and, leaning back on the sofa, she took his hand. 'Things are dark, and I fancy they will be darker; but brightness will come, somehow or other, to you, darling, for you are born for brightness. You will find friends in life, and they will be women.'

It was nearly three years since Endymion had travelled down to Hurstley by the same coach that was now carrying him to London. Though apparently so uneventful, the period had not been unimportant in the formation, doubtless yet partial, of his character. And all its influences had been beneficial to him. The crust of pride and selfishness with which large prosperity and illimitable indulgence had encased a kind, and far from presumptuous, disposition had been removed; the domestic sentiments in their sweetness and purity had been developed; he had acquired some skill in scholarship and no inconsiderable fund of sound information; and the routine of religious thought had been superseded in his instance by an amount of knowledge and feeling on matters theological, unusual at his time of life.

Though apparently not gifted with any dangerous vivacity, or fatal facility of acquisition, his mind seemed clear and painstaking, and distinguished by common sense. He was brave and accurate.

Mr. Rodney was in waiting for him at the inn. He seemed a most distinguished gentleman. A hackney coach carried them to Warwick Street, where he was welcomed by Mrs. Rodney, who was exquisitely dressed. There was also her sister, a girl not older than Endymion, the very image of Mrs. Rodney, except that she was a brunette—a brilliant brunette. This sister bore the romantic name of Imogene, for which she was indebted to her father performing the part of the husband of the heroine in Maturin's tragedy of the 'Castle of St. Aldobrand,' and which, under the inspiration of Kean, had set the town in a blaze about the time of her birth. Tea was awaiting him, and there was a mixture in their several manners of not ungraceful hospitality and the remembrance of past dependence, which was genuine and not uninteresting, though Endymion was yet too inexperienced to observe all this.

Mrs. Rodney talked very much of Endymion's mother; her wondrous beauty, her more wondrous dresses; the splendour of her fêtes and equipages. As she dilated on the past, she seemed to share its lustre and its triumphs. 'The first of the land were always in attendance on her,' and for Mrs. Rodney's part, she never saw a real horsewoman since her dear lady. Her sister did not speak, but listened with rapt attention to the gorgeous details, occasionally stealing a glance at Endymion—a glance of deep interest, of admiration mingled, as it were, both with reverence and pity.

Mr. Rodney took up the conversation if his wife paused. He spoke of all the leading statesmen who had been the habitual companions of Mr. Ferrars, and threw out several anecdotes respecting them from personal experience. 'I knew them all,' continued Mr. Rodney, 'I might say intimately;' and then he told his great anecdote, how he had been so fortunate as perhaps even to save the Duke's life during the Reform Bill riots. 'His Grace has never forgotten it, and only the day before yesterday I met him in St. James' Street walking with Mr. Arbuthnot, and he touched his hat to me.'

All this gossip and good nature, and the kind and lively scene, saved Endymion from the inevitable pang, or at least greatly softened it, which accompanies our first separation from home. In due season, Mrs. Rodney observed that she doubted not Mr. Endymion, for so they ever called him, must be wearied with his journey, and would like to retire to his room; and her husband, immediately lighting a candle, prepared to introduce their new lodger to his quarters.

It was a tall house, which had recently been renovated, with a story added to it, and on this story was Endymion's chamber; not absolutely a garret, but a modern substitute for that sort of apartment. 'It is rather high,' said Mr. Rodney, half apologising for the ascent, 'but Mr. Ferrars himself chose the room. We took the liberty of lighting a fire to-night.'

And the cheerful blaze was welcome. It lit up a room clean and not uncomfortable. Feminine solicitude had fashioned a toilette-table for him, and there was a bunch of geraniums in a blue vase on its sparkling dimity garniture. 'I suppose you have in your bag all that you want at present?' said Mr. Rodney.

'To-morrow we will unpack your trunks and arrange your things in their drawers; and after breakfast, if you please, I will show you your way to Somerset House.'

Somerset House! thought Endymion, as he stood before the fire alone. Is it so near as that? To-morrow, and I am to be at Somerset House? And then he thought of what they were doing at Hurstley —of that terrible parting with his mother, which made him choke—and of his father's last words. And then he thought of Myra, and the tears stole down his cheek. And then he knelt down by his bedside and prayed.

CHAPTER XX.

New Associations.

R. RODNEY would have accompanied Endymion to Somerset House under any circumstances, but it so happened that he had reasons of his own for a visit to that celebrated building. He had occasion to see a gentleman who was stationed there. 'Not,' as he added to Endymion, 'that I know many here, but at the Treasury and in Downing Street I have several acquaintances.'

They separated at the door in the great quadrangle which led to the department to which Endymion was attached, and he contrived in due time to deliver to a messenger a letter addressed to his future chief. He was kept some time in a gloomy and almost unfurnished waiting-room, and his thoughts in a desponding mood were gathering round the dear ones who were distant, when he was summoned, and, following the messenger down a passage, was ushered into a lively apartment on which the sun was shining, and which, with its well-lined book-shelves, and tables covered with papers, and bright noisy clock, and general air of habitation and business, con-

trasted favourably with the room he had just quitted. A good-natured-looking man held out his hand and welcomed him cordially, and said at once, 'I served, Mr. Ferrars, under your grandfather at the Treasury, and I am glad to see you here.' Then he spoke of the duties which Endymion would have at present to discharge. His labours at first would be somewhat mechanical; they would require only correctness and diligence; but the office was a large one, and promotion not only sure, but sometimes rapid, and as he was so young, he might with attention count on attaining, while yet in the prime of life, a future of very responsible duties and of no inconsiderable emolument.

While he was speaking he rang the bell and commanded the attendance of a clerk, under whose care Endymion was specially placed. This was a young man of pleasant address, who invited Endymion with kindness to accompany him, and leading him through several chambers, some capacious, and all full of clerks seated on high stools and writing at desks, finally ushered him into a smaller chamber where there were not above six or eight at work, and where there was a vacant seat. 'This is your place,' he said, 'and now I will introduce you to your future comrades. This is Mr. Jawett, the greatest Radical of the age, and who, when he is President of the Republic, will, I hope, do a job for his friends here. This is Mr. St. Barbe, who, when the public taste has improved, will be the most popular author of the day. In the meantime he will give you a copy of his novel, which has not sold as it ought to have done, and in which we say he has quizzed all his friends. This is Mr. Seymour Hicks,

who, as you must perceive, is a man of fashion.' And so he went on, with what was evidently accustomed raillery. All laughed, and all said something courteous to Endymion, and then after a few minutes they resumed their tasks, Endymion's work being to copy long lists of figures, and routine documents of public accounts.

In the meantime, Mr. St. Barbe was busy in drawing up a public document of a different but important character, and which was conceived something in this fashion:—

'We, the undersigned, highly approving of the personal appearance and manners of our new colleague, are unanimously of opinion that he should be invited to join our symposium to-day at the immortal Joe's.'

This was quietly passed round and signed by all present, and then given to Mr. Trenchard, who, all unconsciously to the copying Endymion, wrote upon it, like a minister of state, 'Approved,' with his initial.

Joe's, more technically known as 'The Blue Posts,' was a celebrated chop-house in Naseby Street, a large, low-ceilinged, wainscoted room, with the floor strewn with sawdust, and a hissing kitchen in the centre, and fitted up with what were called boxes, these being of various sizes, and suitable to the number of the guests requiring them. About this time the fashionable coffee-houses, George's and the Piazza, and even the coffee-rooms of Stevens' or Long's, had begun to feel the injurious competition of the new clubs that of late years had been established;

but these, after all, were limited, and, comparatively speaking, exclusive societies. Their influence had not touched the chop-houses, and it required another quarter of a century before their cheerful and hospitable roofs and the old taverns of London, so full, it ever seemed, of merriment and wisdom, yielded to the gradually increasing but irresistible influence of those innumerable associations, which, under classic names, or affecting to be the junior branches of celebrated confederacies, have since secured to the million, at cost price, all the delicacies of the season, and substituted for the zealous energy of immortal Joes the inexorable but frigid discipline of managing committees.

'You are our guest to-day,' said Mr. Trenchard to Endymion. 'Do not be embarrassed. It is a custom with us, but not a ruinous one. We dine off the joint, but the meat is firstrate, and you may have as much as you like, and our tipple is half-and-half. Perhaps you do not know it. Let me drink to your health.'

They ate most heartily; but when their well-earned meal was despatched, their conversation, assisted by a moderate portion of some celebrated toddy, became animated, various, and interesting. Endymion was highly amused; but being a stranger, and the youngest present, his silence was not unbecoming, and his manner indicated that it was not occasioned by want of sympathy. The talk was very political. They were all what are called Liberals, having all of them received their appointments since the catastrophe of 1830; but the shades in the colour of their opinions were various and strong. Jawett was uncompromising; ruthlessly logical, his principles being clear, he

was for what he called 'carrying them out' to their just conclusions. Trenchard, on the contrary, thought everything ought to be compromise, and that a public man ceased to be practical the moment he was logical. St. Barbe believed that literature and the arts, and intellect generally, had as little to hope for from one party as from the other; while Seymour Hicks was of opinion that the Tories never would rally, owing to their deficiency in social influences. Seymour Hicks sometimes got an invitation to a ministerial soirée.

The vote of the House of Commons in favour of an appropriation of the surplus revenues of the Irish Church to the purposes of secular education — a vote which had just changed the government and expelled the Tories — was much discussed. Jawett denounced it as a miserable subterfuge, but with a mildness of manner and a mincing expression, which amusingly contrasted with the violence of his principles and the strength of his language.

'The whole of the revenues of the Protestant Church should be at once appropriated to secular education, or to some other purpose of general utility,' he said. 'And it must come to this.'

Trenchard thought the ministry had gone as far in this matter as they well could, and Seymour Hicks remarked that any government which systematically attacked the Church would have 'society' against it. Endymion, who felt very nervous, but who on Church questions had strong convictions, ventured to ask why the Church should be deprived of its property.

'In the case of Ireland,' replied Jawett, quite in a tone of conciliatory condescension, 'because it does not fulfil the purpose for which it was endowed. It

has got the property of the nation, and it is not the Church of the people. But I go further than that. I would disendow every Church. They are not productive institutions. There is no reason why they should exist. There is no use in them.'

'No use in the Church!' said Endymion, reddening; but Mr. Trenchard, who had tact, here interfered, and said, 'I told you our friend Jawett was a great Radical; but he is in a minority among us on these matters. Everybody, however, says what he likes at Joe's.'

Then they talked of theatres, and critically discussed the articles in the daily papers and the last new book, and there was much discussion respecting a contemplated subscription boat; but still, in general, it was remarkable how they relapsed into their favourite subject—speculation upon men in office, both permanent and parliamentary, upon their characters and capacity, their habits and tempers. One was a good administrator, another did nothing; one had no detail, another too much; one was a screw, another a spendthrift; this man could make a set speech, but could not reply; his rival, capital at a reply but clumsy in a formal oration.

At this time London was a very dull city, instead of being, as it is now, a very amusing one. Probably there never was a city in the world, with so vast a population, which was so melancholy. The aristocracy probably have always found amusements adapted to the manners of the time and the age in which they lived. The middle classes, half a century ago, had little distraction from their monotonous toil and melancholy anxieties, except, perhaps, what they found in religious and philanthropic societies. Their

general life must have been very dull. Some traditionary merriment always lingered among the working classes of England. Both in town and country they had always their games and fairs and junketing parties, which have developed into excursion trains and colossal picnics. But of all classes of the community, in the days of our fathers, there was none so unfortunate in respect of public amusements as the bachelors about town. There were, one might almost say, only two theatres, and they so huge, that it was difficult to see or hear in either. Their monopolies, no longer redeemed by the stately genius of the Kembles, the pathos of Miss O'Neill, or the fiery passion of Kean, were already menaced, and were soon about to fall; but the crowd of diminutive but sparkling substitutes, which have since taken their place, had not yet appeared, and half-price at Drury Lane or Covent Garden was a dreary distraction after a morning of desk work. There were no Alhambras then, and no Cremornes, no palaces of crystal in terraced gardens, no casinos, no music-halls, no aquaria, no promenade concerts. Evans' existed, but not in the fulness of its modern development; and the most popular place of resort was the barbarous conviviality of the Cider Cellar.

Mr. Trenchard had paid the bill, collected his quotas and rewarded the waiter, and then, as they all rose, said to Endymion, 'We are going to the divan. Do you smoke?'

Endymion shook his head; but Trenchard added, 'Well, you will some day; but you had better come with us. You need not smoke; you can order a cup of coffee, and then you may read all the newspapers and magazines. It is a nice lounge.'

So emerging from Naseby Street into the Strand, they soon entered a tobacconist's shop, and passing through it were admitted into a capacious saloon, well lit and fitted up with low, broad sofas, fixed against the walls, and on which were seated, or reclining, many persons, chiefly smoking cigars, but some few practising with the hookah and other oriental modes. In the centre of the room was a table covered with newspapers and publications of that class. The companions from Joe's became separated after their entrance, and St. Barbe, addressing Endymion, said, 'I am not inclined to smoke to-day. We will order some coffee and you will find some amusement in this;' and he placed in his hands a number of *Scaramouch*.

'I hope you will like your new life,' said St. Barbe, throwing down a review on the divan, and leaning back sipping his coffee. 'One thing may be said in favour of it: you will work with a body of as true-hearted comrades as ever existed. They are always ready to assist one. Thorough good-natured fellows, that I will say for them. I suppose it is adversity,' he continued, 'that develops the kindly qualities of our nature. I believe the sense of common degradation has a tendency to make the degraded amiable — at least among themselves. I am told it is found so in the plantations in slave-gangs.'

'But I hope we are not a slave-gang,' said Endymion.

'It is horrible to think of gentlemen, and men of education, and perhaps firstrate talents — who knows? — reduced to our straits,' said St. Barbe. 'I do not follow Jawett in all his views, for I hate political

economy, and never could understand it; and he gives it you pure and simple, eh? eh?—but, I say, it is something awful to think of the incomes that some men are making, who could no more write an article in *Scaramouch,* than fly.'

'But our incomes may improve,' said Endymion. 'I was told to-day that promotion was even rapid in our office.'

'Our incomes may improve when we are bent and grey,' said St. Barbe, 'and we may even retire on a pension about as good as a nobleman leaves to his valet. Oh, it is a horrid world! Your father is a privy councillor, is not he?'

'Yes, and so was my grandfather, but I do not think I shall ever be one.'

'It is a great thing to have a father a privy councillor,' said St. Barbe, with a glance of envy. 'If I were the son of a privy councillor, those demons, Shuffle and Screw, would give me £500 for my novel, which now they put in their beastly magazine and print in small type, and do not pay me so much as a powdered flunkey has in St. James' Square. I agree with Jawett: the whole thing is rotten.'

'Mr. Jawett seems to have very strange opinions,' said Endymion. 'I did not like to hear what he said at dinner about the Church, but Mr. Trenchard turned the conversation, and I thought best to let it pass.'

'Trenchard is a sensible man, and a good fellow,' said St. Barbe; 'you like him?'

'I find him kind.'

'Do you know,' said St. Barbe, in a whisper, and with a distressed and almost vindictive expression of countenance, 'that man may come any day into four

thousand a year. There is only one life between him and the present owner. I believe it is a good life,' he added, in a more cheerful voice, 'but still it might happen. Is it not horrible? Four thousand a year! Trenchard with four thousand a year, and we receiving little more than the pay of a butler!'

'Well, I wish, for his sake, he might have it,' said Endymion, 'though I might lose a kind friend.'

'Look at Seymour Hicks,' said St. Barbe; 'he has smoked his cigar, and he is going. He never remains. He is going to a party, I'll be bound. That fellow gets about in a most extraordinary manner. Is it not disgusting? I doubt whether he is asked much to dinner though, or I think we should have heard of it. Nevertheless, Trenchard said the other day that Hicks had dined with Lord Cinque-Ports. I can hardly believe it; it would be too disgusting. No lord ever asked me to dinner. But the aristocracy of this country are doomed!'

'Mr. Hicks,' said Endymion, 'probably lays himself out for society.'

'I suppose you will,' said St. Barbe, with a scrutinising air. 'I should if I were the son of a privy councillor. Hicks is nothing; his father kept a stable-yard and his mother was an actress. We have had several dignitaries of the Church in my family and one admiral. And yet Hicks dines with Lord Cinque-Ports! It is positively revolting! But the things he does to get asked!—sings, rants, conjures, ventriloquises, mimics, stands on his head. His great performance is a parliamentary debate. We will make him do it for you. And yet, with all this, a dull dog—a very dull dog, sir. He wrote for *Scaramouch* some little time, but they can stand it no more.

Between you and me, he has had notice to quit. That I know; and he will probably get the letter when he goes home from his party to-night. So much for success in society! I shall now say good-night to you.'

CHAPTER XXI.

A Glimpse of Gay Life.

IT WAS only ten o'clock when Endymion returned to Warwick Street, and for the first time in his life used a pass-key, with which Mr. Rodney had furnished him in the morning, and re-entered his new home. He thought he had used it very quietly, and was lighting his candle and about to steal up to his lofty heights, when from the door of the parlour, which opened into the passage, emerged Miss Imogene, who took the candlestick from his hand and insisted on waiting upon him.

'I thought I heard something,' she said; 'you must let me light you up, for you can hardly yet know your way. I must see too if all is right; you may want something.'

So she tripped up lightly before him, showing, doubtless without premeditation, as well-turned an ankle and as pretty a foot as could fall to a damsel's fortunate lot. 'My sister and Mr. Rodney have gone to the play,' she said, 'but they left strict injunctions with me to see that you were comfortable, and that you wanted for nothing that we could supply.'

'You are too kind,' said Endymion, as she lighted the candles on his dressing-table, 'and, to tell you the truth, these are luxuries I am not accustomed to, and to which I am not entitled.'

'And yet,' she said, with a glance of blended admiration and pity, 'they tell me time was when gold was not good enough for you, and I do not think it could be.'

'Such kindness as this,' said Endymion, 'is more precious than gold.'

'I hope you will find your things well arranged. All your clothes are in these two drawers; the coats in the bottom one, and your linen in those above. You will not perhaps be able to find your pocket-handkerchiefs at first. They are in this sachet; my sister made it herself. Mr. Rodney says you are to be called at eight o'clock and breakfast at nine. I think everything is right. Good-night, Mr. Endymion.'

The Rodney household was rather a strange one. The first two floors, as we have mentioned, were let, and at expensive rates, for the apartments were capacious and capitally furnished, and the situation, if not distinguished, was extremely convenient — quiet from not being a thoroughfare, and in the heart of civilisation. They only kept a couple of servants, but their principal lodgers had their personal attendants. And yet after sunset the sisters appeared and presided at their tea-table, always exquisitely dressed; seldom alone, for Mr. Rodney had many friends, and lived in a capacious apartment, rather finely furnished, with a round table covered with gaudy print-books, a mantelpiece crowded with vases of mock Dresden, and a cottage piano, on which Imogene could accompany her more than pleasing voice.

Somehow or other, the process is difficult to trace, Endymion not unfrequently found himself at Mrs. Rodney's tea-table. On the first occasion or so, he felt himself a little shy and embarrassed, but it soon became natural to him, and he would often escape from the symposia at Joe's, and, instead of the divan, find in Warwick Street a more congenial scene. There were generally some young men there, who seemed delighted with the ladies, listened with enthusiasm to Imogene's singing, and were allowed to smoke. They were evidently gentlemen, and indeed Mr. Rodney casually mentioned to Endymion that one of the most frequent guests might some day even be a peer of the realm. Sometimes there was a rubber of whist, and, if wanted, Mrs. Rodney took a hand in it; Endymion sitting apart and conversing with her sister, who amused him by her lively observations, indicating even flashes of culture; but always addressed him without the slightest pretence and with the utmost naturalness. This was not the case with Mr. Rodney; pretence with him was ingrained, and he was at first somewhat embarrassed by the presence of Endymion, as he could hardly maintain before his late patron's son his favourite character of the aristocratic victim of revolution. And yet this drawback was more than counterbalanced by the gratification of his vanity in finding a Ferrars his habitual guest. Such a luxury seemed a dangerous indulgence, but he could not resist it, and the moth was always flying round the candle. There was no danger, however, and that Mr. Rodney soon found out. Endymion was born with tact, and it came to him as much from goodness of heart as fineness of taste. Mr. Rodney, therefore, soon resumed his an-

ecdotes of great men and his personal experience of their sayings, manners, and customs, with which he was in the habit of enlivening or ornamenting the whist table; occasionally introducing Endymion to the notice of the table by mentioning in a low tone, 'That is Mr. Ferrars, in a certain sense under my care; his father is a privy councillor, and had it not been for the revolution—for I maintain, and always will, the Reform Bill was neither more nor less than a revolution—would probably have been Prime Minister. He was my earliest and my best friend.'

When there were cards, there was always a little supper: a lobster and a roasted potato and that sort of easy thing, and curious drinks, which the sisters mixed and made, and which no one else, at least all said so, could mix and make. On fitting occasions a bottle of champagne appeared, and then the person for whom the wine was produced was sure with wonderment to say, 'Where did you get this champagne, Rodney? Could you get me some?' Mr. Rodney shook his head and scarcely gave a hope, but subsequently, when the praise in consequence had continued and increased, would observe, 'Do you really want some? I cannot promise, but I will try. Of course they will ask a high figure.'

'Anything they like, my dear Rodney.'

And in about a week's time the gentleman was so fortunate as to get his champagne.

There was one subject in which Mr. Rodney appeared to be particularly interested, and that was racing. The turf at that time had not developed into that vast institution of national demoralisation which it now exhibits. That disastrous character may be mainly attributed to the determination of our legisla-

tors to put down gaming-houses, which, practically speaking, substituted for the pernicious folly of a comparatively limited class the ruinous madness of the community. There were many influences by which in the highest classes persons might be discouraged or deterred from play under a roof; and in the great majority of cases such a habit was difficult, not to say impossible, to indulge. But in shutting up gaming-houses, we brought the gaming-table into the street, and its practices became the pursuit of those who would otherwise have never witnessed or even thought of them. No doubt Crockford's had its tragedies, but all its disasters and calamities together would hardly equal a lustre of the ruthless havoc which has ensued from its suppression.

Nevertheless, in 1835 men made books, and Mr. Rodney was not inexpert in a composition which requires no ordinary qualities of character and intelligence; method, judgment, self-restraint, not too much imagination, perception of character, and powers of calculation. All these qualities were now in active demand and exercise; for the Derby was at hand, and the Rodney family, deeply interested in the result, were to attend the celebrated festival.

One of the young gentlemen, who sometimes smoked a cigar and sometimes tasted a lobster in their parlour, and who seemed alike and equally devoted to Mrs. Rodney and her sister, insisted upon taking them to Epsom in his drag, and they themselves were to select the party to accompany them. That was not difficult, for they were naturally all friends of their munificent host with one exception. Imogene stipulated that Endymion should be asked, and Mr. Rodney supported the suggestion. 'He is

the son of the privy councillor the Right Hon. William Pitt Ferrars, my earliest and my best friend, and in a certain sense is under my care.'

The drive to the Derby was not then shorn of its humours and glories. It was the Carnival of England, with equipages as numerous and various, and with banter not less quick and witty. It was a bright day—a day, no doubt, of wild hopes and terrible fears, but yet, on the whole, of joy and exultation. And no one was happier and prouder than pretty Mrs. Rodney, exquisitely dressed and sitting on the box of a patrician drag, beside its noble owner. On the seat behind them was Imogene, with Endymion on one side, and on the other the individual 'who might one day be a peer.' Mr. Rodney and some others, including Mr. Vigo, faced a couple of grooms, who sat with folded arms and unmoved countenances, fastidiously stolid amid all the fun, and grave even when they opened the champagne.

The right horse won. Mr. Rodney and his friends pocketed a good stake, and they demolished their luncheon of luxuries with frantic gaiety.

'It is almost as happy as our little suppers in Warwick Street,' whispered their noble driver to his companion.

'Oh! much more than anything you can find there,' simpered Mrs. Rodney.

'I declare to you, some of the happiest hours of my life have been passed in Warwick Street,' gravely murmured her friend.

'I wish I could believe that,' said Mrs. Rodney.

As for Endymion, he enjoyed himself amazingly. The whole scene was new to him—he had never been at a race before, and this was the most famous

of races. He did not know he had betted, but he found he too had won a little money, Mr. Rodney having put him on something, though what that meant he had not the remotest idea. Imogene, however, assured him it was all right — Mr. Rodney constantly put her on something. He enjoyed the luncheon too; the cold chicken, and the French pies, the wondrous salads, and the iced champagne. It seemed that Imogene was always taking care that his plate or his glass should be filled. Everything was delightful, and his noble host, who, always courteous, had hitherto been reserved, called him 'Ferrars.'

What with the fineness of the weather, the inspiration of the excited and countless multitude, the divine stimulus of the luncheon, the kindness of his charming companions, and the general feeling of enjoyment and success that seemed to pervade his being, Endymion felt as if he were almost acting a distinguished part in some grand triumph of antiquity, as returning home, the four splendid dark chestnuts swept along, two of their gay company playing bugles, and the grooms sitting with folded arms of haughty indifference.

Just at this moment his eye fell upon an omnibus full, inside and out, of clerks in his office. There was a momentary stoppage, and while he returned the salute of several of them, his quick eye could not avoid recognising the slightly surprised glance of Trenchard, the curious amazement of Seymour Hicks, and the indignant astonishment of St. Barbe.

'Our friend Ferrars seems in tiptop company,' said Trenchard.

'That may have been a countess on the box,' said

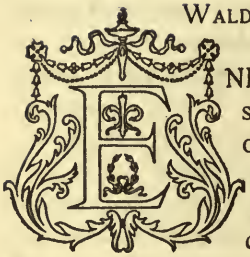
Seymour Hicks, 'for I observed an earl's coronet on the drag. I cannot make out who it is.'

'There is no more advantage in going with four horses than with two,' said St. Barbe; 'indeed, I believe you go slower. It is mere pride; puffed-up vanity. I should like to send those two grooms with their folded arms to the galleys—I hate those fellows. For my part, I never was behind four horses except in a stage-coach. No peer of the realm ever took me on his drag. However, a day of reckoning will come; the people won't stand this much longer.'

Jawett was not there, for he disapproved of races.

CHAPTER XXII.

Waldershare and Imogene.



NDYMION had to encounter a rather sharp volley when he went to the office next morning. After some general remarks as to the distinguished party which he had accompanied to the races, Seymour Hicks could not resist inquiring, though with some circumlocution, whether the lady was a countess. The lady was not a countess. Who was the lady? The lady was Mrs. Rodney. Who was Mrs. Rodney? She was the wife of Mr. Rodney, who accompanied her. Was Mr. Rodney a relation of Lord Rodney? Endymion believed he was not a relation of Lord Rodney. Who was Mr. Rodney, then?

'Mr. Rodney is an old friend of my father.'

This natural solution of doubts and difficulties arrested all further inquiry. Generally speaking, the position of Endymion in his new life was satisfactory. He was regular and assiduous in his attendance at his office, was popular with his comrades, and was cherished by his chief, who had even invited him to dinner. His duties were certainly at present mechanical, but they were associated with an interesting

profession; and humble as was his lot, he began to feel the pride of public life. He continued to be a regular guest at Joe's, and was careful not to seem to avoid the society of his fellow-clerks in the evenings, for he had an instinctive feeling that it was as well they should not become acquainted with his circle in Warwick Street. And yet to him the attractions of that circle became daily more difficult to resist. And often when he was enduring the purgatory of the divan, listening to the snarls of St. Barbe over the shameful prosperity of everybody in this world except the snarler, or perhaps went half-price to the pit of Drury Lane with the critical Trenchard, he was, in truth, restless and absent, and his mind was in another place, indulging in visions which he did not care to analyse, but which were very agreeable.

One evening, shortly after the expedition to Epsom, while the rest were playing a rubber, Imogene said to him, 'I wish you to be friends with Mr. Vigo; I think he might be of use to you.'

Mr. Vigo was playing whist at this moment; his partner was Sylvia, and they were playing against Mr. Rodney and Waldershare.

Waldershare was the tenant of the second floor. He was the young gentleman 'who might some day be a peer.' He was a young man of about three or four and twenty years; fair, with short curly brown hair and blue eyes; not exactly handsome, but with a countenance full of expression, and the index of quick emotions, whether of joy or of anger. Waldershare was the only child of a younger son of a patrician house, and had inherited from his father a moderate but easy fortune. He had been the earliest lodger of the Rodneys, and, taking advantage of the

Tory reaction, had just been returned to the House of Commons.

What he would do there was a subject of interesting speculation to his numerous friends, and it may be said admirers. Waldershare was one of those vivid and brilliant organisations which exercise a peculiarly attractive influence on youth. He had been the hero of the debating club at Cambridge, and many believed in consequence that he must become Prime Minister. He was witty and fanciful, and, though capricious and bad-tempered, could flatter and caress. At Cambridge he had introduced the new Oxford heresy, of which Nigel Penruddock was a votary. Waldershare prayed and fasted, and swore by Laud and Strafford. He took, however, a more eminent degree at Paris than at his original Alma Mater, and becoming passionately addicted to French literature, his views respecting both Church and State became modified—at least in private. His entrance into English society had been highly successful, and as he had a due share of vanity, and was by no means free from worldliness, he had enjoyed and pursued his triumphs. But his versatile nature, which required not only constant, but novel excitement, became palled, even with the society of duchesses. There was a monotony in the splendour of aristocratic life which wearied him, and for some time he had persuaded himself that the only people who understood the secret of existence were the family under whose roof he lodged.

Waldershare was profligate, but sentimental; unprincipled, but romantic; the child of whim, and the slave of an imagination so freakish and deceptive that it was always impossible to foretell his course. He was alike capable of sacrificing all his feelings to

worldly considerations or of forfeiting the world for a visionary caprice. At present his favourite scheme, and one to which he seemed really attached, was to educate Imogene. Under his tuition he had persuaded himself that she would turn out what he styled 'a great woman.' An age of vast change, according to Waldershare, was impending over us. There was no male career in which one could confide. Most men of mark would probably be victims, but 'a great woman' must always make her way. Whatever the circumstances, she would adapt herself to them; if necessary, would mould and fashion them. His dream was that Imogene should go forth and conquer the world, and that in the sunset of life he should find a refuge in some corner of her palaces.

Imogene was only a child when Waldershare first became a lodger. She used to bring his breakfast to his drawing-room and arrange his table. He encountered her one day, and he requested her to remain, and always preside over his meal. He fell in love with her name, and wrote her a series of sonnets, idealising her past, panegyrising her present, and prophetic of her future life. Imogene, who was neither shy nor obtrusive, was calm amid all his vagaries, humoured his fancies, even when she did not understand them, and read his verses as she would a foreign language which she was determined to master.

Her culture, according to Waldershare, was to be carried on chiefly by conversation. She was not to read, or at least not to read much, until her taste was formed and she had acquired the due share of previous knowledge necessary to profitable study. As Waldershare was eloquent, brilliant, and witty, Imogene listened to him with wondering interest and

amusement, even when she found some difficulty in following him; but her apprehension was so quick and her tact so fine that her progress, though she was almost unconscious of it, was remarkable. Sometimes in the evening, while the others were smoking together or playing whist, Waldershare and Imogene, sitting apart, were engaged in apparently the most interesting converse. It was impossible not to observe the animation and earnestness of Waldershare, and the great attention with which his companion responded to his representations. Yet all this time he was only giving her a lecture on Madame de Sévigné.

Waldershare used to take Imogene to the National Gallery and Hampton Court, and other delightful scenes of popular education, but of late Mrs. Rodney had informed her sister that she was no longer young enough to permit these expeditions. Imogene accepted the announcement without a murmur, but it occasioned Waldershare several sonnets of heartrending remonstrance. Imogene continued, however, to make his breakfast, and kept his parliamentary papers in order, which he never could manage, but the mysteries of which Imogene mastered with feminine quickness and precision. Whenever Waldershare was away he always maintained a constant correspondence with Imogene. In this he communicated everything to her without the slightest reserve; describing everything he saw, almost everything he heard, pages teeming with anecdotes of a world of which she could know nothing—the secrets of courts and coteries, memoirs of princes and ministers, of dandies and dames of fashion. 'If anything happens to me,' Waldershare would say to Imogene, 'this correspondence may be worth thousands to you, and when it is

published it will connect your name with mine, and assist my grand idea of your becoming "a great woman."'

'But I do not know Mr. Vigo,' whispered Endymion to Imogene.

'But you have met him here, and you went together to Epsom. It is enough. He is going to ask you to dine with him on Saturday. We shall be there, and Mr. Waldershare is going. He has a beautiful place, and it will be very pleasant.' And exactly as Imogene had anticipated, Mr. Vigo, in the course of the evening, did ask Endymion to do him the honour of becoming his guest.

The villa of Mr. Vigo was on the banks of the Thames, and had once belonged to a noble customer. The Palladian mansion contained a suite of chambers of majestic dimensions — lofty ceilings, rich cornices, and vast windows of plate glass; the gardens were rich with the products of conservatories which Mr. Vigo had raised with every modern improvement, and a group of stately cedars supported the dignity of the scene and gave to it a name. Beyond, a winding walk encircled a large field which Mr. Vigo called the park, and which sparkled with gold and silver pheasants, and the keeper lived in a newly-raised habitation at the extreme end, which took the form of a Swiss cottage.

The Rodney family, accompanied by Mr. Waldershare and Endymion, went to the Cedars by water. It was a delightful afternoon of June, the river warm and still, and the soft, fitful western breeze occasionally rich with the perfume of the gardens of Putney and Chiswick. Waldershare talked the whole way. It was a rhapsody of fancy, fun,

knowledge, anecdote, brilliant badinage — even passionate seriousness. Sometimes he recited poetry, and his voice was musical; and then, when he had attuned his companions to a sentimental pitch, he would break into mockery, and touch with delicate satire every mood of human feeling. Endymion listened to him in silence and admiration. He had never heard Waldershare talk before, and he had never heard anybody like him. All this time, what was now, and ever, remarkable in Waldershare were his manners. They were finished, even to courtliness. Affable and winning, he was never familiar. He always addressed Sylvia as if she were one of those duchesses round whom he used to linger. He would bow deferentially to her remarks, and elicit from some of her casual observations an acute or graceful meaning, of which she herself was by no means conscious. The bow of Waldershare was a study. Its grace and ceremony must have been organic; for there was no traditionary type in existence from which he could have derived or inherited it. He certainly addressed Imogene and spoke of her by her Christian name; but this was partly because he was in love with the name, and partly because he would persist in still treating her as a child. But his manner to her always was that of tender respect. She was almost as silent as Endymion during their voyage, but not less attentive to her friend. Mr. Rodney was generally silent, and never opened his mouth on this occasion except in answer to an inquiry from his wife as to whom a villa might belong, and it seemed always that he knew every villa, and every one to whom they belonged.

The sisters were in demi-toilette, which seemed artless, though in fact it was profoundly devised.

Sylvia was the only person who really understood the meaning of *simplex munditiis*, and this was one of the secrets of her success. There were some ladies on the lawn of the Cedars when they arrived, not exactly of their school, and who were finely and fully dressed. Mrs. Gamme was the wife of a sporting attorney, a friend of Mr. Vigo, and who also, having a villa at hand, was looked upon as a country neighbour. Mrs. Gamme was universally recognised to be a fine woman, and she dressed up to her reputation. She was a famous whist-player at high points, and dealt the cards with hands covered with diamond rings. Another country neighbour was the chief partner in the celebrated firm of Hooghley, Dacca, & Co., dealers in Indian and other shawls. Mr. Hooghley had married a celebrated actress, and was proud and a little jealous of his wife. Mrs. Hooghley had always an opportunity at the Cedars of meeting some friends in her former profession, for Mr. Vigo liked to be surrounded by genius and art. 'I must have talent,' he would exclaim, as he looked round at the amusing and motley multitude assembled at his splendid entertainments. And to-day upon his lawn might be observed the first tenor of the opera and a prima-donna who had just arrived, several celebrated members of the English stage of both sexes, artists of great reputation, whose principal works already adorned the well-selected walls of the Cedars, a *danseuse* or two of celebrity, some literary men, as Mr. Vigo styled them, who were chiefly brethren of the periodical press, and more than one member of either House of Parliament.

Just as the party were preparing to leave the lawn and enter the dining-room arrived, breathless and glow-

ing, the young earl who had driven the Rodneys to the Derby.

'A shaver, my dear Vigo! Only returned to town this afternoon, and found your invitation. How fortunate!' And then he looked around, and recognising Mrs. Rodney, was immediately at her side. 'I must have the honour of taking you in to dinner. I got your note, but only by this morning's post.'

The dinner was a banquet, — a choice bouquet before every guest, turtle and venison and piles of whitebait, and pine-apples of prodigious size, and bunches of grapes that had gained prizes. The champagne seemed to flow in fountains, and was only interrupted that the guests might quaff Burgundy or taste Tokay. But what was more delightful than all was the enjoyment of all present, and especially of their host. That is a rare sight. Banquets are not rare, nor choice guests, nor gracious hosts; but when do we ever see a person enjoy anything? But these gay children of art and whim, and successful labour and happy speculation, some of them very rich and some of them without a sou, seemed only to think of the festive hour and all its joys. Neither wealth nor poverty brought them cares. Every face sparkled, every word seemed witty, and every sound seemed sweet. A band played upon the lawn during the dinner, and was succeeded, when the dessert commenced, by strange choruses from singers of some foreign land, who for the first time aired their picturesque costumes on the banks of the Thames.

When the ladies had withdrawn to the saloon, the first comic singer of the age excelled himself; and when they rejoined their fair friends, the primo-tenore and the prima-donna gave them a grand scena, suc-

ceeded by the English performers in a favourite scene from a famous farce. Then Mrs. Gamme had an opportunity of dealing with her diamond rings, and the rest danced — a waltz of whirling grace, or merry cotillon of jocund bouquets.

'Well, Clarence,' said Waldershare to the young earl, as they stood for a moment apart, 'was I right?'

'By Jove! yes. It is the only life. You were quite right. We should indeed be fools to sacrifice ourselves to the conventional.'

The Rodney party returned home in the drag of the last speaker. They were the last to retire, as Mr. Vigo wished for one cigar with his noble friend. As he bade farewell, and cordially, to Endymion, he said, 'Call on me to-morrow morning in Burlington Street in your way to your office. Do not mind the hour. I am an early bird.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

Mr. Vigo's Proposal.

'T IS no favour,' said Mr. Vigo; 'it is not even an act of friendliness; it is a freak, and it is my freak; the favour, if there be one, is conferred by you.'

'But I really do not know what to say,' said Endymion, hesitating and confused.

'I am not a classical scholar,' said Mr. Vigo, 'but there are two things which I think I understand—men and horses. I like to back them both when I think they ought to win.'

'But I am scarcely a man,' said Endymion, rather piteously, 'and I sometimes think I shall never win anything.'

'That is my affair,' replied Mr. Vigo; 'you are a yearling, and I have formed my judgment as to your capacity. What I wish to do in your case is what I have done in others, and some memorable ones. Dress does not make a man, but it often makes a successful one. The most precious stone, you know, must be cut and polished. I shall enter your name in my books for an unlimited credit, and no account to be settled till you are a privy councillor. I do not limit the credit, because you are a man of sense and

a gentleman, and will not abuse it. But be quite as careful not to stint yourself as not to be needlessly extravagant. In the first instance, you would be interfering with my experiment, and that would not be fair.'

This conversation took place in Mr. Vigo's counting-house the morning after the entertainment at his villa. Endymion called upon Mr. Vigo in his way to his office, as he had been requested to do, and Mr. Vigo had expressed his wishes and intentions with regard to Endymion, as intimated in the preceding remarks.

'I have known many an heiress lost by her suitor being ill-dressed,' said Mr. Vigo. 'You must dress according to your age, your pursuits, your object in life; you must dress too, in some cases, according to your set. In youth a little fancy is rather expected, but if political life be your object, it should be avoided, at least after one-and-twenty. I am dressing two brothers now, men of considerable position; one is a mere man of pleasure, the other will probably be a minister of state. They are as like as two peas, but were I to dress the dandy and the minister the same, it would be bad taste—it would be ridiculous. No man gives me the trouble which Lord Eglantine does; he has not made up his mind whether he will be a great poet or prime minister. "You must choose, my lord," I tell him. "I cannot send you out looking like Lord Byron if you mean to be a Canning or a Pitt." I have dressed a great many of our statesmen and orators, and I always dress them according to their style and the nature of their duties. What all men should avoid is the "shabby genteel." No man ever gets over it. I will save you from that. You had better be in rags.'

CHAPTER XXIV.

Youthful Orators.

HEN the twins had separated, they had resolved on a system of communication which had been, at least on the part of Myra, scrupulously maintained. They were to interchange letters every week, and each letter was to assume, if possible, the shape of a journal, so that when they again met no portion of the interval should be a blank in their past lives. There were few incidents in the existence of Myra; a book, a walk, a visit to the rectory, were among the chief. The occupations of their father were unchanged, and his health seemed sustained, but that of her mother was not satisfactory. Mrs. Ferrars had never rallied since the last discomfiture of her political hopes, and had never resumed her previous tenor of life. She was secluded, her spirits uncertain, moods of depression succeeded by fits of unaccountable excitement, and, on the whole, Myra feared a general and chronic disturbance of her nervous system. His sister prepared Endymion for encountering a great change in their parent when he returned home. Myra, however, never expatiated on the affairs of Hurstley. Her annals in this respect were

somewhat dry. She fulfilled her promise of recording them, but no more. Her pen was fuller and more eloquent in her comments on the life of her brother, and of the new characters with whom he had become acquainted.

She was delighted to hear about Mr. Jawett, and especially about Mr. St. Barbe, and was much pleased that he had been to the Derby, though she did not exactly collect who were his companions. Did he go with that kind Mr. Trenchard? It would seem that Endymion's account of the Rodney family had been limited to vague though earnest acknowledgments of their great civility and attention, which added much to the comfort of his life. Impelled by some of these grateful though general remarks, Mrs. Ferrars, in a paroxysm of stately gratitude, had sent a missive to Sylvia, such as a sovereign might address to a deserving subject, at the same time acknowledging and commending her duteous services. Such was the old domestic superstition of the Rodneys, that, with all their worldliness, they treasured this effusion as if it had really emanated from the centre of power and courtly favour.

Myra, in her anticipations of speedily meeting her brother, was doomed to disappointment. She had counted on Endymion obtaining some holidays in the usual recess, but in consequence of having so recently joined the office, Endymion was retained for summer and autumnal work, and not until Christmas was there any prospect of his returning home.

The interval between midsummer and that period, though not devoid of seasons of monotony and loneliness, passed in a way not altogether unprofitable to Endymion. Waldershare, who had begun to notice

him, seemed to become interested in his career. Waldershare knew all about his historic ancestor, Endymion Carey. The bubbling imagination of Waldershare clustered with a sort of wild fascination round a living link with the age of the cavaliers. He had some Stuart blood in his veins, and his ancestors had fallen at Edgehill and Marston Moor. Waldershare, whose fancies alternated between Strafford and St. Just, Archbishop Laud and the Goddess of Reason, reverted for the moment to his visions on the banks of the Cam, and the brilliant rhapsodies of his boyhood.

His long conversations with Nigel Penruddock had prepared Endymion in some degree for these mysteries, and perhaps it was because Waldershare found that Endymion was by no means ill-informed on these matters, and therefore there was less opportunity of dazzling and moulding him, which was a passion with Waldershare, that he soon quitted the Great Rebellion for pastures new, and impressed upon his pupil that all that had occurred before the French Revolution was ancient history. The French Revolution had introduced the cosmopolitan principle into human affairs instead of the national, and no public man could succeed who did not comprehend and acknowledge that truth. Waldershare lent Endymion books, and books with which otherwise he would not have become acquainted. Unconsciously to himself, the talk of Waldershare, teeming with knowledge, and fancy, and playfulness, and airy sarcasm of life, taught him something of the art of conversation—to be prompt without being stubborn, to refute without argument, and to clothe grave matters in a motley garb.

But in August Waldershare disappeared, and at the beginning of September, even the Rodneys had gone to Margate. St. Barbe was the only clerk left in Endymion's room. They dined together almost every day, and went on the top of an omnibus to many a suburban paradise. 'I tell you what,' said St. Barbe, as they were watching one day together the humours of the world in the crowded tea-garden and bustling bowling-green of Canonbury Tavern; 'a fellow might get a good chapter out of this scene. I could do it, but I will not. What is the use of lavishing one's brains on an ungrateful world? Why, if that fellow Gushy were to write a description of this place, which he would do like a penny-a-liner drunk with ginger beer, every countess in Mayfair would be reading him, not knowing, the idiot, whether she ought to smile or shed tears, and sending him cards with "At Home" upon them as large as life. Oh! it is disgusting! absolutely disgusting. It is a nefarious world, sir. You will find it out some day. I am as much robbed by that fellow Gushy as men are on the highway. He is appropriating my income, and the income of thousands of honest fellows. And then he pretends he is writing for the people! The people! What does he know about the people? Annals of the New Cut and Saffron Hill. He thinks he will frighten some lord, who will ask him to dinner. And that he calls progress. I hardly know which is the worst class in this country — the aristocracy, the middle class, or what they call the people. I hate them all.'

About the fall of the leaf the offices were all filled again, and among the rest Trenchard returned. 'His brother has been ill,' said St. Barbe. 'They say that

Trenchard is very fond of him. Fond of a brother who keeps him out of four thousand pounds per annum! What will man not say? And yet I could not go and congratulate Trenchard on his brother's death. It would be "bad taste." Trenchard would perhaps never speak to me again, though he had been lying awake all night chuckling over the event. And Gushy takes an amiable view of this world of hypocrisy and plunder. And that is why Gushy is so popular!'

There was one incident at the beginning of November which eventually exercised no mean influence on the life of Endymion. Trenchard offered one evening to introduce him as a guest to a celebrated debating society, of which Trenchard was a distinguished member. This society had grown out of the Union at Cambridge, and was originally intended to have been a metropolitan branch of that famous association. But in process of time it was found that such a constitution was too limited to ensure those numbers and that variety of mind desirable in such an institution. It was therefore opened to the whole world duly qualified. The predominant element, however, for a long time consisted of Cambridge men.

This society used to meet in a large room, fitted up as much like the House of Commons as possible, and which was in Freemasons' Tavern, in Great Queen Street. Some hundred and fifty members were present when Endymion paid his first visit there, and the scene to Endymion was novel and deeply interesting. Though only a guest, he was permitted to sit in the body of the chamber, by the side of Trenchard, who kindly gave him some information, as the proceedings advanced, as to the principal personages who took part in them.

The question to-night was, whether the decapitation of Charles the First were a justifiable act, and the debate was opened in the affirmative by a young man with a singularly sunny face and a voice of music. His statement was clear and calm. Though nothing could be more uncompromising than his opinions, it seemed that nothing could be fairer than his facts.

'That is Hortensius,' said Trenchard; 'he will be called this term. They say he did nothing at the university, and is too idle to do anything at the bar; but I think highly of him. You should hear him in reply.'

The opening speech was seconded by a very young man, in a most artificial style, remarkable for its superfluity of intended sarcasm, which was delivered in a highly elaborate tone, so that the speaker seemed severe without being keen.

''Tis the new Cambridge style,' whispered Trenchard, 'but it will not go down here.'

The question having been launched, Spruce arose, a very neat speaker; a little too mechanical, but plausible. Endymion was astonished at the dexterous turns in his own favour which he gave to many of the statements of Hortensius, and how he mangled and massacred the seconder, who had made a mistake in a date.

'He is the Tory leader,' said Trenchard. 'There are not twenty Tories in the Union, but we always listen to him. He is sharp; Jawett will answer him.'

And, accordingly, that great man arose. Jawett, in dulcet tones of philanthropy, intimated that he was not opposed to the decapitation of kings; on the contrary, if there were no other way of getting rid of

them, he would have recourse to such a method. But he did not think the case before them was justifiable.

'Always crotchety,' whispered Trenchard.

Jawett thought the whole conception of the opening speech erroneous. It proceeded on the assumption that the execution of Charles was the act of the people; on the contrary, it was an intrigue of Cromwell, who was the only person who profited by it.

Cromwell was vindicated and panegyrised in a flaming speech by Montreal, who took this opportunity of denouncing alike kings and bishops, Church and State, with powerful invective, terminating his address by the expression of an earnest hope that he might be spared to witness the inevitable Commonwealth of England.

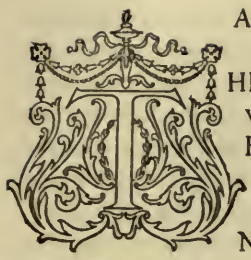
'He only lost his election for Rattleton by ten votes,' said Trenchard. 'We call him the Lord Protector, and his friends here think he will be so.'

The debate was concluded, after another hour, by Hortensius, and Endymion was struck by the contrast between his first and his second manner. Safe from reply, and reckless in his security, it is not easy to describe the audacity of his retorts, or the tumult of his eloquence. Rapid, sarcastic, humorous, picturesque, impassioned, he seemed to carry everything before him, and to resemble his former self in nothing but the music of his voice, which lent melody to scorn, and sometimes reached the depth of pathos.

Endymion walked home with Mr. Trenchard, and in a musing mood. 'I should not care how lazy I was,' said Endymion, 'if I could speak like Hortensius.'

CHAPTER XXV.

A Sad Christmas.



HE snow was falling about the time when the Swindon coach, in which Endymion was a passenger, was expected at Hurstley, and the snow had been falling all day. Nothing had been more dreary than the outward world, or less entitled to the merry epithet which is the privilege of the season. The gardener had been despatched to the village inn, where the coach stopped, with a lantern and cloaks and umbrellas. Within the house the huge blocks of smouldering beech sent forth a hospitable heat, and, whenever there was a sound, Myra threw cones on the inflamed mass, that Endymion might be welcomed with a blaze. Mrs. Ferrars, who had appeared to-day, though late, and had been very nervous and excited, broke down half an hour before her son could arrive, and, murmuring that she would reappear, had retired. Her husband was apparently reading, but his eye wandered and his mind was absent from the volume.

The dogs barked, Mr. Ferrars threw down his book, Myra forgot her cones; the door burst open, and she was in her brother's arms.

'And where is mamma?' said Endymion, after he had greeted his father.

'She will be here directly,' said Mr. Ferrars. 'You are late, and the suspense of your arrival a little agitated her.'

Three quarters of a year had elapsed since the twins had parted, and they were at that period of life when such an interval often produces no slight changes in personal appearance. Endymion, always tall for his years, had considerably grown; his air, and manner, and dress were distinguished. But three quarters of a year had produced a still greater effect upon his sister. He had left her a beautiful girl: her beauty was not less striking, but it was now the beauty of a woman. Her mien was radiant but commanding, and her brow, always remarkable, was singularly impressive.

They stood in animated converse before the fire, Endymion between his father and his sister and retaining of each a hand, when Mr. Ferrars nodded to Myra and said, 'I think now;' and Myra, not reluctantly, but not with happy eagerness, left the room.

'She is gone for your poor mother,' said Mr. Ferrars; 'we are uneasy about her, my dear boy.'

Myra was some time away, and when she returned she was alone. 'She says she must see him first in her room,' said Myra, in a low voice, to her father; 'but that will never do; you or I must go with him.'

'You had better go,' said Mr. Ferrars.

She took her brother's hand and led him away. 'I go with you to prevent dreadful scenes,' said his sister on the staircase. 'Try to behave just as in old times, and as if you saw no change.'

Myra went into the chamber first, to give to her mother, if possible, the keynote of the interview, and

of which she had already furnished the prelude. 'We are all so happy to see Endymion again, dear mamma. Papa is quite gay.'

And then when Endymion, answering his sister's beckon, entered, Mrs. Ferrars rushed forward with a sort of laugh, and cried out, 'Oh! I am so happy to see you again, my child. I feel quite gay.'

He embraced her, but he could not believe it was his mother. A visage at once haggard and bloated had supplanted that soft and rich countenance which had captivated so many. A robe concealed her attenuated frame; but the lustrous eyes were bleared and bloodshot, and the accents of the voice, which used to be at once melodious and a little drawling, hoarse, harsh, and hurried.

She never stopped talking; but it was all in one key, and that the prescribed one — her happiness at his arrival, the universal gaiety it had produced, and the merry Christmas they were to keep. After a time she began to recur to the past, and to sigh; but instantly Myra interfered with 'You know, mamma, you are to dine downstairs to-day, and you will hardly have time to dress;' and she motioned to Endymion to retire.

Mrs. Ferrars kept the dinner waiting a long time, and, when she entered the room, it was evident that she was painfully excited. She had a cap on, and had used some rouge.

'Endymion must take me in to dinner,' she hurriedly exclaimed as she entered and then grasped her son's arm.

It seemed a happy and even a merry dinner, and yet there was something about it forced and constrained. Mrs. Ferrars talked a great deal, and En-

dymion told them a great many anecdotes of those men and things which most interested them, and Myra seemed to be absorbed in his remarks and narratives, and his mother would drink his health more than once, when suddenly she went into hysterics, and all was anarchy. Mr. Ferrars looked distressed and infinitely sad; and Myra, putting her arm round her mother, and whispering words of calm or comfort, managed to lead her out of the room, and neither of them returned.

'Poor creature!' said Mr. Ferrars, with a sigh. 'Seeing you has been too much for her.'

The next morning Endymion and his sister paid a visit to the rectory, and there they met Nigel, who was passing his Christmas at home. This was a happy meeting. The rector had written an essay on squirrels, and showed them a glass containing that sportive little animal in all its frolic forms. Farmer Thornberry had ordered a patch cleared on the green from the hall to the rectory; 'and that is all,' said Mrs. Penruddock, 'we have to walk upon, except the high road. The snow has drifted to such a degree that it is impossible to get to the chase. I went out the day before yesterday with Carlo as a guide. When I did not clearly make out my way, I sent him forward, and sometimes I could only see his black head emerging from the snow. So I had to retreat.'

Mrs. Ferrars did not appear this day. Endymion visited her in her room. He found her flighty and incoherent. She seemed to think that he had returned permanently to Hurstley, and said she never had any good opinion of the scheme of his leaving them. If it had been the Foreign Office, as was promised, and his father had been in the Cabinet,

which was his right, it might have been all very well. But, if he were to leave home, he ought to have gone into the Guards, and it was not too late. And then they might live in a small house in town, and look after him. There were small houses in Wilton Crescent which would do very well. Besides, she herself wanted change of air. Hurstley did not agree with her. She had no appetite. She never was well except in London, or Wimbledon. She wished that, as Endymion was here, he would speak to his father on the subject. She saw no reason why they should not live at their place at Wimbledon as well as here. It was not so large a house, and, therefore, would not be so expensive.

Endymion's holiday was only to last a week, and Myra seemed jealous of his sparing any portion of it to Nigel; yet the rector's son was sedulous in his endeavours to enjoy the society of his former companion. There seemed some reason for his calling at the hall every day. Mr. Ferrars broke through his habits, and invited Nigel to dine with them; and after dinner, saying that he would visit Mrs. Ferrars, who was unwell, left them alone. It was the only time they had yet been alone. Endymion found that there was no change in the feelings and views of Nigel respecting Church matters, except that his sentiments and opinions were more assured, and, if possible, more advanced. He would not tolerate any reference to the state of the nation; it was the state of the Church which engrossed his being. No government was endurable that was not divine. The Church was divine, and on that he took his stand.

Nigel was to take his degree next term, and orders as soon as possible. He looked forward with

confidence, after doubtless a period of disturbance, confusion, probably violence, and even anarchy, to the establishment of an ecclesiastical polity that would be catholic throughout the realm. Endymion just intimated the very contrary opinions that Jawett held upon these matters, and mentioned, though not as an adherent, some of the cosmopolitan sentiments of Waldershare.

'The Church is cosmopolitan,' said Nigel; 'the only practicable means by which you can attain to identity of motive and action.'

Then they rejoined Myra, but Nigel soon recurred to the absorbing theme. His powers had much developed since he and Endymion used to wander together over Hurstley Chase. He had great eloquence, his views were startling and commanding, and his expressions forcible and picturesque. All was heightened, too, by his striking personal appearance and the beauty of his voice. He seemed something between a young prophet and an inquisitor; a remarkable blending of enthusiasm and self-control.

A person more experienced in human nature than Endymion might have observed that all this time, while Nigel was to all appearance chiefly addressing himself to Endymion, he was, in fact, endeavouring to impress his sister. Endymion knew, from the correspondence of Myra, that Nigel had been, especially in the summer, much at Hurstley; and when he was alone with his sister, he could not help remarking, 'Nigel is as strong as ever in his views.'

'Yes,' she replied; 'he is very clever and very good-looking. It is a pity he is going into the Church. I do not like clergymen.'

On the third day of the visit, Mrs. Ferrars was announced to be unwell, and in the evening very unwell; and Mr. Ferrars sent to the nearest medical man, and he was distant, to attend her. The medical man did not arrive until past midnight, and, after visiting his patient, looked grave. She had fever, but of what character it was difficult to decide. The medical man had brought some remedies with him, and he stayed the night at the hall. It was a night of anxiety and alarm, and the household did not retire until nearly the break of dawn.

The next day it seemed that the whole of the Penruddock family were in the house. Mrs. Penruddock insisted on nursing Mrs. Ferrars, and her husband looked as if he thought he might be wanted. It was unreasonable that Nigel should be left alone. His presence, always pleasing, was a relief to an anxious family, and who were beginning to get alarmed. The fever did not subside. On the contrary, it increased, and there were other dangerous symptoms. There was a physician of fame at Oxford, whom Nigel wished they would call in. Matters were too pressing to wait for posts, and too complicated to trust to an ordinary messenger. Nigel, who was always well mounted, was in his saddle in an instant. He seemed to be all resource, consolation, and energy: 'If I am fortunate, he will be here in four hours; at all events, I will not return alone.'

Four terrible hours were these: Mr. Ferrars, restless and sad, and listening with a vacant or an absent look to the kind and unceasing talk of the rector; Myra, silent in her mother's chamber; and Endymion, wandering about alone with his eyes full of tears. This was the Merry Christmas he had talked of, and

this his long-looked-for holiday. He could think of nothing but his mother's kindness; and the days gone by, when she was so bright and happy, came back to him with painful vividness. It seemed to him that he belonged to a doomed and unhappy family. Youth and its unconscious mood had hitherto driven this thought from his mind; but it occurred to him now, and would not be driven away.

Nigel was fortunate. Before sunset he returned to Hurstley in a postchaise with the Oxford physician, whom he had furnished with an able and accurate diagnosis of the case. All that art could devise, and all that devotion could suggest, were lavished on the sufferer, but in vain; and four days afterwards, the last day of Endymion's long-awaited holiday, Mr. Ferrars closed for ever the eyes of that brilliant being who, with some weaknesses, but many noble qualities, had shared with no unequal spirit the splendour and the adversity of his existence.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Nigel's Dearest Wish.

NIGEL took a high degree and obtained first-class honours. He was ordained by the bishop of the diocese as soon after as possible. His companions, who looked up to him with every expectation of his eminence and influence, were disappointed, however, in the course of life on which he decided. It was different from that which he had led them to suppose it would be. They had counted on his becoming a resident light of the University, filling its highest offices, and ultimately reaching the loftiest stations in the Church. Instead of that he announced that he had resolved to become a curate to his father, and that he was about to bury himself in the solitude of Hurstley.

It was in the early summer following the death of Mrs. Ferrars that he settled there. He was frequently at the hall, and became intimate with Mr. Ferrars. Notwithstanding the difference of age, there was between them a sympathy of knowledge and thought. In spite of his decided mind, Nigel listened to Mr. Ferrars with deference, soliciting his judgment, and

hanging, as it were, on his accents of wise experience and refined taste. So Nigel became a favourite with Mr. Ferrars; for there are few things more flattering than the graceful submission of an accomplished intellect, and, when accompanied by youth, the spell is sometimes fascinating.

The death of his wife seemed to have been a great blow to Mr. Ferrars. The expression of his careworn, yet still handsome, countenance became, if possible, more saddened. It was with difficulty that his daughter could induce him to take exercise, and he had lost altogether that seeming interest in their outer world which once at least he affected to feel. Myra, though ever content to be alone, had given up herself much to her father since his great sorrow; but she felt that her efforts to distract him from his broodings were not eminently successful, and she hailed with a feeling of relief the establishment of Nigel in the parish, and the consequent intimacy that arose between him and her father.

Nigel and Myra were necessarily under these circumstances thrown much together. As time advanced he passed his evenings generally at the hall, for he was a proficient in the only game which interested Mr. Ferrars, and that was chess. Reading and writing all day, Mr. Ferrars required some remission of attention, and his relaxation was chess. Before the games, and between the games, and during delightful tea-time, and for the happy quarter of an hour which ensued when the chief employment of the evening ceased, Nigel appealed much to Myra, and endeavoured to draw out her mind and feelings. He lent her books, and books that favoured, indirectly at least, his own peculiar views—volumes of divine

poesy that had none of the twang of psalmody, tales of tender and sometimes wild and brilliant fancy, but ever full of symbolic truth.

Chess-playing requires complete abstraction, and Nigel, though he was a double first, occasionally lost a game from a lapse in that condensed attention that secures triumph. The fact is, he was too frequently thinking of something else besides the moves on the board, and his ear was engaged while his eye wandered, if Myra chanced to rise from her seat or make the slightest observation.

The woods were beginning to assume the first fair livery of autumn, when it is beautiful without decay. The lime and the larch had not yet dropped a golden leaf, and the burnished beeches flamed in the sun. Every now and then an occasional oak or elm rose, still as full of deep green foliage as if it were midsummer; while the dark verdure of the pines sprang up with effective contrast amid the gleaming and resplendent chestnuts.

There was a glade at Hurstley, bounded on each side with masses of yew, their dark green forms now studded with crimson berries. Myra was walking one morning in this glade when she met Nigel, who was on one of his daily pilgrimages, and he turned round and walked by her side.

'I am sure I cannot give you news of your brother,' he said, 'but I have had a letter this morning from Endymion. He seems to take great interest in his debating club.'

'I am so glad he has become a member of it,' said Myra. 'That kind Mr. Trenchard, whom I shall never see to thank him for all his goodness to Endymion, proposed him. It occupies his evenings

twice a week, and then it gives him subjects to think of and read up in the interval.'

'Yes; it is a good thing,' said Nigel moodily; 'and if he is destined for public life, which perhaps he may be, no contemptible discipline.'

'Dear boy!' said Myra, with a sigh. 'I do not see what public life he is destined to, except slaving at a desk. But sometimes one has dreams.'

'Yes; we all have dreams,' said Nigel, with an air of abstraction.

'It is impossible to resist the fascination of a fine autumnal morn,' said Myra; 'but give me the long days of summer and its rich leafy joys. I like to wander about, and dine at nine o'clock.'

'Delightful, doubtless, with a sympathising companion.'

'Endymion was such a charming companion,' said Myra.

'But he has left us,' said Nigel; 'and you are alone.'

'I am alone,' said Myra; 'but I am used to solitude, and I can think of him.'

'Would I were Endymion,' said Nigel, 'to be thought of by you!'

Myra looked at him with something of a stare; but he continued—

'All seasons would be to me fascination, were I only by your side. Yes; I can no longer resist the irresistible confession of my love. I am here, and I am here only, because I love you. I quitted Oxford and all its pride that I might have the occasional delight of being your companion. I was not presumptuous in my thoughts, and believed that would content me; but I can no longer resist the consummate spell, and I offer you my heart and my life.'

'I am amazed; I am a little overwhelmed,' said Myra. 'Pardon me, dear Mr. Penruddock — dear Nigel — you speak of things of which I have not thought.'

'Think of them! I implore you to think of them, and now!'

'We are a fallen family,' said Myra, 'perhaps a doomed one. We are not people to connect yourself with. You have witnessed some of our sorrows, and soothed them. I shall be ever grateful to you for the past. But I sometimes feel our cup is not yet full, and I have long resolved to bear my cross alone. But, irrespective of all other considerations, I can never leave my father.'

'I have spoken to your father,' said Nigel, 'and he approved my suit.'

'While my father lives I shall not quit him,' said Myra; 'but, let me not mislead you, I do not live for my father — I live for another.'

'For another?' inquired Nigel, with anxiety.

'For one you know. My life is devoted to Endymion. There is a mystic bond between us, originating, perhaps, in the circumstance of our birth; for we are twins. I never mean to embarrass him with a sister's love, and perhaps hereafter may see less of him even than I see now; but I shall be in the world, whatever be my lot, high or low — the active, stirring world — working for him, thinking only of him. Yes; moulding events and circumstances in his favour;' and she spoke with fiery animation. 'I have brought myself, by long meditation, to the conviction that a human being with a settled purpose must accomplish it, and that nothing can resist a will that will stake even existence for its fulfilment.'

CHAPTER XXVII.

Myra's Decision.

NDYMION had returned to his labours, after the death of his mother, much dispirited. Though young and hopeful, his tender heart could not be insensible to the tragic end. There is anguish in the recollection that we have not adequately appreciated the affection of those whom we have loved and lost. It tortured him to feel that he had often accepted with carelessness or indifference the homage of a heart that had been to him ever faithful in its multiplied devotion. Then, though he was not of a melancholy and brooding nature, in this moment of bereavement he could not drive from his mind the consciousness that there had long been hanging over his home a dark lot, as it were, of progressive adversity. His family seemed always sinking, and he felt conscious how the sanguine spirit of his mother had sustained them in their trials. His father had already made him the depositary of his hopeless cares; and if anything happened to that father, old and worn out before his time, what would become of Myra?

Nigel, who in their great calamity seemed to have thought of everything, and to have done everything,

had written to the chief of the office, and also to Mr. Trenchard, explaining the cause of the absence of Endymion from his duties. There were no explanations, therefore, necessary when he reappeared; no complaints, but only sympathy and general kindness. In Warwick Street there was unaffected sorrow; Sylvia wept and went into the prettiest mourning for her patroness, and Mr. Rodney wore a crape on his hat. 'I never saw her,' said Imogene, 'but I am told she was heavenly.'

Waldershare was very kind to Endymion, and used to take him to the House of Commons on interesting evenings, and, if he succeeded in getting Endymion a place under the gallery, would come and talk to him in the course of the night, and sometimes introduce him to the mysteries of Bellamy's, where Endymion had the satisfaction of partaking of a steak in the presence of statesmen and senators.

'You are in the precincts of public life,' said Waldershare; 'and if you ever enter it, which I think you will,' he would add thoughtfully, 'it will be interesting for you to remember that you have seen these characters, many of whom will then have passed away. Like the shades of a magic lantern,' he added, with something between a sigh and a smile. 'One of my constituents sent me a homily this morning, the burthen of which was, I never thought of death. The idiot! I never think of anything else. It is my weakness. One should never think of death. One should think of life. That is real piety.'

This spring and summer were passed tranquilly by Endymion, but not unprofitably. He never went to any place of public amusement, and, cherishing his sorrow, declined those slight openings to social life

which occasionally offered themselves even to him; but he attended his debating club with regularity, and, though silent, studied every subject which was brought before it. It interested him to compare their sayings and doings with those of the House of Commons, and he found advantage in the critical comparison. Though not in what is styled society, his mind did not rust from the want of intelligent companions. The clear perception, accurate knowledge, and unerring judgment of Trenchard, the fantastic cynicism of St. Barbe, and all the stores of the exuberant and imaginative Waldershare were brought to bear on a young and plastic intelligence, gifted with a quick though not a too profound sensibility which soon ripened into tact, and which, after due discrimination, was tenacious of beneficial impressions.

In the autumn, Endymion returned home for a long visit and a happy one. He found Nigel settled at Hurstley, and almost domesticated at the hall; his father more cheerful than his sister's earlier letters had led him to suppose; and she herself so delighted by the constant companionship of her brother that she seemed to have resumed all her original pride of life.

Nearly two years' acquaintance, however limited with the world, had already exercised a ripening influence over Endymion. Nigel soon perceived this, though, with a native tact which circumstances had developed, Endymion avoided obtruding his new conclusions upon his former instructor. But that deep and eager spirit, unwilling ever to let a votary escape, and absorbed intellectually by one vast idea, would not be baffled. Nigel had not renounced the early view of Endymion taking orders, and spoke of his London life as an incident which, with his youth, he

might in time only look upon as an episode in his existence.

'I trust I shall ever be a devoted son of the Church,' said Endymion; 'but I confess I feel no predisposition to take orders, even if I had the opportunity, which probably I never shall have. If I were to choose my career it would be public life. I am on the last step of the ladder, and I do not suppose that I can ever be anything but a drudge. But even that would interest me. It brings one in contact with those who are playing the great game. One at least fancies one comprehends something of the government of mankind. Mr. Waldershare takes me often to the House of Commons, and I must say, I am passionately fond of it.'

After Endymion's return to London that scene occurred between Nigel and Myra, in the glade at Hurstley, which we have noticed in the preceding chapter. In the evening of that day Nigel did not pay his accustomed visit to the hall, and the father and the daughter were alone. Then it was, notwithstanding evident agitation, and even with some degree of solemnity, that Mr. Ferrars broke to his daughter that there was a subject on which he wished seriously to confer with her.

'Is it about Nigel?' she inquired with calmness.

'It is about Nigel.'

'I have seen him, and he has spoken to me.'

'And what have you replied?'

'What I fear will not be satisfactory to you, sir, but what is irrevocable.'

'Your union would give me life and hope,' said Mr. Ferrars; and then, as she remained silent, he continued after a pause: 'For its happiness there

seems every security. He is of good family, and with adequate means, and, I firmly believe, no inconsiderable future. His abilities are already recognised; his disposition is noble. As for his personal qualities, you are a fitter judge than I am; but, for my part, I never saw a countenance that more became the beauty and nobility of his character.'

'I think him very good-looking,' said Myra, 'and there is no doubt he is clever, and he has shown himself, on more than one occasion, amiable.'

'Then what more can you require?' said Mr. Ferrars.

'I require nothing; I do not wish to marry.'

'But, my daughter, my dearest daughter,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'bear with the anxiety of a parent who is at least devoted to you. Our separation would be my last and severest sorrow, and I have had many; but there is no necessity to consider that case, for Nigel is content, is more content, to live as your husband under this roof.'

'So he told me.'

'And that removed one objection that you might naturally feel?'

'I certainly should never leave you, sir,' said Myra, 'and I told Nigel so; but that contingency had nothing to do with my decision. I declined his offer, because I have no wish to marry.'

'Women are born to be married,' said Mr. Ferrars.

'And yet I believe most marriages are unhappy,' said Myra.

'Oh! if your objection to marry Nigel arises from an abstract objection to marriage itself,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'it is a subject which we might talk over calmly, and perhaps remove your prejudices.'

'I have no prejudices against marriage,' rejoined Myra. 'It is likely enough that I may marry some day, and probably make an unhappy marriage; but that is not the question before us. It is whether I should marry Nigel. That cannot be, my dear father, and he knows it. I have assured him so in a manner which cannot be mistaken.'

'We are a doomed family!' exclaimed the unhappy Mr. Ferrars, clasping his hands.

'So I have long felt,' said Myra. 'I can bear our lot; but I want no strangers to be introduced to share its bitterness, and soothe us with their sympathy.'

'You speak like a girl,' said Mr. Ferrars, 'and a headstrong girl, which you always have been. You know not what you are talking about. It is a matter of life or death. Your decorous marriage would have saved us from absolute ruin.'

'Alone, I can meet absolute ruin,' said Myra. 'I have long contemplated such a contingency, and am prepared for it. My marriage with Nigel could hardly save you, sir, from such a visitation, if it be impending. But I trust in that respect, if in no other, you have used a little of the language of exaggeration. I have never received, and I have never presumed to seek, any knowledge of your affairs; but I have assumed, that for your life, somehow or other, you would be permitted to exist without disgrace. If I survive you, I have neither care nor fear.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A Fascinating Foreigner.

N THE following spring a vexatious incident occurred in Warwick Street. The highly considered county member, who was the yearly tenant of Mr. Rodney's first floor, and had been always a valuable patron, suddenly died. An adjourned debate, a tough beefsteak, a select committee still harder, and an influenza caught at three o'clock in the morning in an imprudent but irresistible walk home with a confidential Lord of the Treasury, had combined very sensibly to affect the income of Mr. Rodney. At first he was sanguine that such a desirable dwelling would soon find a suitable inhabitant, especially as Mr. Waldershare assured him that he would mention the matter to all his friends. But time rolled on, and the rooms were still vacant; and the fastidious Rodneys, who at first would only listen to a yearly tenant, began to reduce their expectations. Matters had arrived at such a pass in May, that, for the first time in their experience, they actually condescended to hoist an announcement of furnished apartments.

In this state of affairs a cab rattled up to the house one morning, out of which a young gentleman jumped

briskly, and, knocking at the door, asked, of the servant who opened it, whether he might see the apartments. He was a young man, apparently not more than one or two and twenty, of a graceful figure, somewhat above the middle height, fair, with a countenance not absolutely regular, but calm and high-bred. His dress was in the best taste, but to a practised eye had something of a foreign cut, and he wore a slight moustache.

'The rooms will suit me,' he said, 'and I have no doubt the price you ask for them is a just one;' and he bowed with high-bred courtesy to Sylvia, who was now in attendance on him, and who stood with her pretty hands in the pretty pockets of her pretty apron.

'I am glad to hear that,' said Sylvia. 'We have never let them before except to a yearly tenant.'

'And if we suit each other,' said the gentleman, 'I should have no great objection to become such.'

'In these matters,' said Sylvia, after a little hesitation, 'we give and receive references. Mr. Rodney is well known in this neighbourhood and in Westminster generally; but I dare say,' she adroitly added, 'he has many acquaintances known to you, sir.'

'Not very likely,' replied the young gentleman; 'for I am a foreigner, and only arrived in England this morning;' though he spoke English without the slightest accent.

Sylvia looked a little perplexed; but he continued: 'It is quite just that you should be assured to whom you are letting your lodgings. The only reference I can give you is to my banker, but he is almost too great a man for such matters. Perhaps,' he added, pulling out a case from his breast-pocket, and taking

out of it a note, which he handed to Sylvia, 'this may assure you that your rent will be paid.'

Sylvia took a rapid glance at the hundred-pound-note, and twisting it into her little pocket with apparent *sang-froid,* though she held it with a tight grasp, murmured that it was quite unnecessary, and then offered to give her new lodger an acknowledgment of it.

'That is really unnecessary,' he replied. 'Your appearance commands from me that entire confidence which on your part you very properly refuse to a stranger and a foreigner like myself.'

'What a charming young man!' thought Sylvia, pressing with emotion her hundred-pound-note.

'Now,' continued the young gentleman, 'I will return to the station to release my servant, who is a prisoner there with my luggage. Be pleased to make him at home. I shall myself not return probably till the evening; and in the meantime,' he added, giving Sylvia his card, 'you will admit anything that arrives here addressed to Colonel Albert.'

The settlement of Colonel Albert in Warwick Street was an event of no slight importance. It superseded for a time all other topics of conversation, and was discussed at length in the evenings, especially with Mr. Vigo. Who was he? And in what service was he colonel? Mr. Rodney, like a man of the world, assumed that all necessary information would in time be obtained from the colonel's servant; but even men of the world sometimes miscalculate. The servant, who was a Belgian, had only been engaged by the colonel at Brussels a few days before his departure for England, and absolutely knew nothing of his master, except that he was a gentleman with plenty of money

and sufficient luggage. Sylvia, who was the only person who had seen the colonel, was strongly in his favour.

Mr. Rodney looked rather doubtful, and avoided any definite opinion until he had had the advantage of an interview with his new lodger. But this was not easy to obtain. Colonel Albert had no wish to see the master of the house, and, if he ever had that desire, his servant would accordingly communicate it in the proper quarter. At present he was satisfied with all the arrangements, and wished neither to make nor to receive remarks. The habits of the new lodger were somewhat of a recluse. He was generally engaged in his rooms the whole day, and seldom left them till the evening, and nobody, as yet, had called upon him. Under these circumstances, Imogene was instructed to open the matter to Mr. Waldershare when she presided over his breakfast-table; and that gentleman said he would make inquiries about the colonel at the Travellers' Club, where Waldershare passed a great deal of his time. 'If he be anybody,' said Mr. Waldershare, 'he is sure in time to be known there, for he will be introduced as a visitor.' At present, however, it turned out that the Travellers knew nothing of Colonel Albert; and time went on, and Colonel Albert was not introduced as a visitor there.

After a little while there was a change in the habits of the colonel. One morning, about noon, a groom, extremely well appointed, and having under his charge a couple of steeds of breed and beauty, called at Warwick Street, and the colonel rode out, and was long absent, and after that, every day, and generally at the same hour, mounted his horse. Mr. Rodney was never wearied of catching a glimpse of

his distinguished lodger over the blinds of the ground-floor room, and of admiring the colonel's commanding presence in his saddle, distinguished as his seat was alike by its grace and vigour.

In the course of a little time, another incident connected with the colonel occurred which attracted notice and excited interest. Towards the evening a brougham, marked, but quietly, with a foreign coronet, stopped frequently at Mr. Rodney's house, and a visitor to the colonel appeared in the form of a middle-aged gentleman who never gave his name, and evaded, it seemed with practised dexterity, every effort, however adroit, to obtain it. The valet was tried on his head also, and replied with simplicity that he did not know the gentleman's name, but he was always called the Baron.

In the middle of June a packet arrived one day by the coach, from the rector of Hurstley, addressed to Endymion, announcing his father's dangerous illness, and requesting him instantly to repair home. Myra was too much occupied to write even a line.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Another Tragedy.

T WAS strange that Myra did not write, were it only a line. It was so unlike her. How often this occurred to Endymion during his wearisome and anxious travel! When the coach reached Hurstley, he found Mr. Penruddock waiting for him. Before he could inquire after his father, that gentleman said, 'Myra is at the rectory; you are to come on there.'

'And my father?'——

'Matters are critical,' said Mr. Penruddock, as it were avoiding a direct answer, and hastening his pace.

It was literally not a five minutes' walk from the village inn to the rectory, and they walked in silence. The rector took Endymion at once into his study; for we can hardly call it a library, though some shelves of books were there, and many stuffed birds.

The rector closed the door with care, and looked distressed, and, beckoning to Endymion to be seated, he said, while still standing and half turning away his head, 'My dear boy, prepare yourself for the worst.'

'Ah! he is gone then! my dear, dear father!' and Endymion burst into passionate tears, and leant on the table, his face hid in his hands.

The rector walked up and down the room with an agitated countenance. He could not deny, it would seem, the inference of Endymion; and yet he did not proffer those consolations which might be urged, and which it became one in his capacity peculiarly to urge.

'I must see Myra,' said Endymion eagerly, looking up with a wild air and streaming eyes.

'Not yet,' said the rector; 'she is much disturbed. Your poor father is no more; it is too true; but,' and here the rector hesitated, 'he did not die happily.'

'What do you mean?' said Endymion.

'Your poor father had much to try him,' said the rector. 'His life, since he was amongst us here, was a life, for him, of adversity — perhaps of great adversity — yet he bore up against it with a Christian spirit; he never repined. There was much that was noble and exalted in his character. But he never overcame the loss of your dear mother. He was never himself afterwards. He was not always master of himself. I could bear witness to that,' said the rector, talking, as it were, to himself. 'Yes; I could conscientiously give evidence to that effect'——

'What effect?' asked Endymion, with a painful scrutiny.

'I could show,' said the rector, speaking slowly, and in a low voice, 'and others could show, that he was not master of himself when he committed the rash act.'

'Oh, Mr. Penruddock!' exclaimed Endymion, starting from his chair, and seizing the rector by his arm. 'What is all this?'

'That a great sorrow has come upon you, and your sister, and all of us,' said Mr. Penruddock; 'and you, and she, and all of us must bow before the Divine will in trembling, though in hope. Your father's death was not natural.'

Such was the end of William Pitt Ferrars, on whom nature, opportunity, and culture appeared to have showered every advantage. His abilities were considerable, his ambition greater. Though intensely worldly, he was not devoid of affections. He found refuge in suicide, as many do, from want of imagination. The present was too hard for him, and his future was only a chaotic nebula.

Endymion did not see his sister that evening. She was not made aware of his arrival, and was alone with Mrs. Penruddock, who never left her night or day. The rector took charge of her brother, and had a sofa-bed made for him in the kind man's room. He was never to be alone. Never the whole night did poor Endymion close his eyes; and he was almost as much agitated about the impending interview with Myra, as about the dark event of terror that had been disclosed to him.

Yet that dreaded interview must take place; and, about noon, the rector told him that Myra was in the drawing-room alone, and would receive him. He tottered as he crossed the hall; grief and physical exhaustion had unmanned him; his eyes were streaming with tears; he paused for a moment with his hand upon the door; he dreaded the anguish of her countenance.

She advanced and embraced him with tenderness; her face was grave, but not a tear even glistened.

'I have been living in a tragedy for years,' said

Myra, in a low, hollow voice; 'and the catastrophe has now arrived.'

'Oh, my dear father!' exclaimed Endymion; and he burst into a renewed paroxysm of grief.

'Yes; he was dear to us, and we were dear to him,' said Myra; 'but the curtain has fallen. We have to exert ourselves. Energy and self-control were never more necessary to two human beings than to us. Here are his keys; his papers must be examined by no one but ourselves. There is a terrible ceremony taking place, or impending. When it is all over, we must visit the hall at least once more.'

The whole neighbourhood was full of sorrow for the event, and of sympathy for those bereft. It was universally agreed that Mr. Ferrars had never recovered the death of his wife; had never been the same man after it; had become distrait, absent, wandering in his mind, and the victim of an invincible melancholy. Several instances were given of his inability to manage his affairs. The jury, with Farmer Thornberry for foreman, hesitated not in giving a becoming verdict. In those days information travelled slowly. There were no railroads then, and no telegraphs, and not many clubs. A week elapsed before the sad occurrence was chronicled in a provincial paper, and another week before the report was reproduced in London, and then in an obscure corner of the journal, and in small print. Everything gets about at last, and the world began to stare and talk; but it passed unnoticed to the sufferers, except by a letter from Zenobia, received at Hurstley after Myra had departed from her kind friends. Zenobia was shocked, nay, overwhelmed, by what she had heard; wanted to know if she could be of use; offered to do anything; begged

Myra to come and stay with her in St. James' Square; and assured her that, if that were not convenient, when her mourning was over Zenobia would present her at court, just the same as if she were her own daughter.

When the fatal keys were used, and the papers of Mr. Ferrars examined, it turned out worse than even Myra, in her darkest prescience, had anticipated. Her father had died absolutely penniless. As executor of his father, the funds settled on his wife had remained under his sole control, and they had entirely disappeared. There was a letter addressed to Myra on this subject. She read it with a pale face, said nothing, and, without showing it to Endymion, destroyed it. There was to be an immediate sale of their effects at the hall. It was calculated that the expenses of the funeral and all the country bills might be defrayed by its proceeds.

'And there will be enough left for me,' said Myra. 'I only want ten pounds; for I have ascertained that there is no part of England where ten pounds will not take me.'

Endymion sighed and nearly wept when she said these things. 'No,' he would add; 'we must never part.'

'That would ensure our common ruin,' said Myra. 'No; I will never embarrass you with a sister. You can only just subsist; for you could not well live in a garret, except at the Rodneys'. I see my way,' said Myra; 'I have long meditated over this—I can draw, I can sing, I can speak many tongues: I ought to be able to get food and clothing; I may get something more. And I shall always be content; for I shall always be thinking of you. However humble

even my lot, if my will is concentrated on one purpose, it must ultimately effect it. That is my creed,' she said, 'and I hold it fervently. I will stay with these dear people for a little while. They are not exactly the family on which I ought to trespass. But never mind. You will be a great man some day, Endymion, and you will remember the good Penruddocks.'

CHAPTER XXX.

The Neuchatels.

ONE of the most remarkable families that have ever flourished in England were the Neuchatels. Their founder was a Swiss, who had established a banking house of high repute in England in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and, irrespective of a powerful domestic connection, had in time pretty well engrossed the largest and best portion of foreign banking business. When the great French Revolution occurred, all the emigrants deposited their jewels and their treasure with the Neuchatels. As the disturbances spread, their example was followed by the alarmed proprietors and capitalists of the rest of Europe; and, independently of their own considerable means, the Neuchatels thus had the command for a quarter of a century, more or less, of adventitious millions. They were scrupulous and faithful stewards; but they were doubtless repaid for their vigilance, their anxiety, and often their risk, by the opportunities which these rare resources permitted them to enjoy.

One of these Neuchatels was a favourite of Mr. Pitt, and assisted the great statesman in his vast

financial arrangements. This Neuchatel was a man of large capacity, and thoroughly understood his period. The minister wished to introduce him to public life, would have opened Parliament to him, and no doubt have showered on him honours and titles. But Neuchatel declined these overtures. He was one of those strong minds who will concentrate their energies on one object; without personal vanity, but with a deep-seated pride in the future. He was always preparing for his posterity. Governed by this passion, although he himself would have been content to live for ever in Bishopsgate Street, where he was born, he had become possessed of a vast principality, and which, strange to say, with every advantage of splendour and natural beauty, was not an hour's drive from Whitechapel.

Hainault House had been raised by a British peer in the days when nobles were fond of building Palladian palaces. It was a chief work of Sir William Chambers, and in its style, its beauty, and almost in its dimensions, was a rival of Stowe or Wanstead. It stood in a deer park, and was surrounded by a royal forest. The family that had raised it wore out in the earlier part of this century. It was supposed that the place must be destroyed and dismantled. It was too vast for a citizen, and the locality was no longer sufficiently refined for a conscript father. In this dilemma, Neuchatel stepped in and purchased the whole affair — palace, and park, and deer, and pictures, and halls, and galleries of statue and bust, and furniture, and even wines, and all the farms that remained, and all the seigneurial rights in the royal forest. But he never lived there. Though he spared nothing in the maintenance and the improvement of

the domain, except on a Sunday he never visited it, and was never known to sleep under its roof. 'It will be ready for those who come after me,' he would remark, with a modest smile.

Those who came after him were two sons, between whom his millions were divided; and Adrian, the eldest, in addition to his share, was made the lord of Hainault. Adrian had inherited something more, and something more precious, than his father's treasure — a not inferior capacity, united, in his case, with much culture, and with a worldly ambition to which his father was a stranger. So long as that father lived, Adrian had been extremely circumspect. He seemed only devoted to business, and to model his conduct on that of his eminent sire. That father who had recognised with pride and satisfaction his capacity, and who was without jealousy, had initiated his son during his lifetime in all the secrets of his wondrous craft, and had entrusted him with a leading part in their affairs. Adrian had waited in Downing Street on Lord Liverpool, as his father years before had waited on Mr. Pitt.

The elder Neuchatel departed this life a little before the second French Revolution of 1830, which had been so fatal to Mr. Ferrars. Adrian, who had never committed himself in politics, further than sitting a short time for a reputed Tory borough, for which he paid a rent of a thousand a year to the proprietor, but who was known to have been nurtured in the school of Pitt and Wellington, astonished the world by voting for Lord Grey's Reform Bill, and announcing himself as a Liberal. This was a large fish for the new Liberal Treasury to capture; their triumph was great, and they determined to show that they

appreciated the power and the influence of their new ally. At the dissolution of 1831, Adrian Neuchatel was a candidate for a popular constituency, and was elected at the head of the poll. His brother, Melchior, was also returned, and a nephew. The Liberals were alarmed by a subscription of fabulous dimensions said to have been collected by the Tories to influence the General Election; and the undoubted contribution of a noble duke was particularly mentioned, which alone appalled the heart of Brooks's. The matter was put before Neuchatel, as he entered the club, to which he had been recently elected with acclamation. 'So you are a little frightened,' he said, with a peculiarly witching smile which he had, half mockery and half good nature; as much as to say, 'I will do what you wish, but I see through you and everybody else.' 'So you are a little frightened. Well; we city men must see what we can do against the dukes. You may put me down for double his amount.'

Adrian purchased a very fine mansion in Portland Place, and took up his residence formally at Hainault. He delighted in the place, and to dwell there in a manner becoming the scene had always been one of his dreams. Now he lived there with unbounded expenditure. He was passionately fond of horses, and even in his father's lifetime had run some at Newmarket in another name. The stables at Hainault had been modelled on those at Chantilly, and were almost as splendid a pile as the mansion itself. They were soon full, and of first-rate animals in their different ways. With his choice teams Adrian could reach Bishopsgate from Hainault, particularly if there were no stoppages in Whitechapel, in much under an hour.

If he had fifty persons in his stables, there were certainly as many in his park and gardens. These latter were most elaborate. It seemed there was nothing that Hainault could not produce: all the fruits and flowers of the tropics. The conservatories and forcing-houses looked, in the distance, like a city of glass. But, after all, the portion of this immense establishment which was most renowned, and perhaps on the whole, best appreciated, was the establishment of the kitchen. The chef was the greatest celebrity in Europe; and he had no limit to his staff, which he had selected with the utmost scrutiny, maintained with becoming spirit, and winnowed with unceasing vigilance. Every day at Hainault was a banquet. What delighted Adrian was to bring down without notice a troop of friends, conscious they would be received as well as if there had been a preparation of weeks. Sometimes it was a body from the Stock Exchange, sometimes a host from the House of Commons, sometimes a board of directors with whom he had been transacting business in the morning. It delighted Adrian to see them quaffing his burgundy, and stuffing down his truffles, and his choice pies from Strasbourg, and all the delicate dishes which many of them looked at with wonder, and tasted with timidity. And then he would, with his particular smile, say to a brother bank director, whose mouth was full, and who could only answer him with his eyes, 'Business gives one an appetite; eh, Mr. Trodgits?'

Sunday was always a great day at Hainault. The Royal and the Stock Exchanges were both of them always fully represented; and then they often had an opportunity, which they highly appreciated, of seeing

and conferring with some public characters, M.P.s of note or promise, and occasionally a secretary of the Treasury, or a privy councillor. 'Turtle makes all men equal,' Adrian would observe. 'Our friend Trodgits seemed a little embarrassed at first, when I introduced him to the Right Honourable; but when they sat next each other at dinner, they soon got on very well.'

On Sunday the guests walked about and amused themselves. No one was allowed to ride or drive; Mrs. Neuchatel did not like riding and driving on Sundays. 'I see no harm in it,' said Adrian, 'but I like women to have their way about religion. And you may go to the stables and see the horses, and that might take up the morning. And then there are the houses; they will amuse you. For my part, I am for a stroll in the forest;' and then he would lead his companions, after a delightful ramble, to some spot of agrestic charm, and, looking at it with delight, would say, 'Pretty, is not it? But then they say this place is not fashionable. It will do, I think, for us city men.'

Adrian had married, when very young, a lady selected by his father. The selection seemed a good one. She was the daughter of a most eminent banker, and had herself, though that was of slight importance, a large portion. She was a woman of abilities, highly cultivated. Nothing had ever been spared that she should possess every possible accomplishment, and acquire every information and grace that it was desirable to attain. She was a linguist, a fine musician, no mean artist; and she threw out, if she willed it, the treasures of her well-stored and not unimaginative mind with ease and sometimes elo-

quence. Her person, without being absolutely beautiful, was interesting. There was even a degree of fascination in her brown velvet eyes. And yet Mrs. Neuchatel was not a contented spirit; and though she appreciated the great qualities of her husband, and viewed him even with reverence as well as affection, she scarcely contributed to his happiness as much as became her. And for this reason. Whether it were the result of physical organisation, or whether it were the satiety which was the consequence of having been born, and bred, and lived for ever, in a society in which wealth was the prime object of existence, and practically the test of excellence, Mrs. Neuchatel had imbibed not merely a contempt for money, but absolutely a hatred of it. The prosperity of her house depressed her. The stables with their fifty grooms, and the grounds with their fifty gardeners, and the daily visit of the head cook to pass the bill of fare, were incidents and circumstances that made her melancholy. She looked upon the Stock Exchange coming down to dinner as she would on an invasion of the Visigoths, and endured the stiff observations or the cumbrous liveliness of the merchants and bank directors with gloomy grace. Something less material might be anticipated from the members of Parliament. But whether they thought it would please the genius of the place, or whether Adrian selected his friends from those who sympathised with his pursuits, the members of Parliament seemed wonderfully to accord with the general tone of the conversation, or varied it only by indulging in technical talk of their own. Sometimes she would make a desperate effort to change the elements of their society; something in this way: 'I see M. Arago

and M. Mignet have arrived here, Adrian. Do not you think we ought to invite them here? And then you might ask Mr. Macaulay to meet them. You said you wished to ask Mr. Macaulay.'

In one respect the alliance between Adrian and his wife was not an unfortunate one. A woman, and a woman of abilities, fastidious, and inclined to be querulous, might safely be counted on as, in general, ensuring for both parties in their union an unsatisfactory and unhappy life. But Adrian, though kind, generous, and indulgent, was so absorbed by his own great affairs, and was a man at the same time of so serene a temper and so supreme a will, that the over-refined fantasies of his wife produced not the slightest effect on the course of his life. Adrian Neuchatel was what very few people are—master in his own house. With a rich varnish of graciousness and favour, he never swerved from his purpose; and, though willing to effect all things by smiles and sweet temper, he had none of that morbid sensibility which allows some men to fret over a phrase, to be tortured by a sigh, or to be subdued by a tear.

There had been born of this marriage only one child, the greatest heiress in England. She had been christened after her father, Adriana. She was now about seventeen; and, had she not been endowed with the finest disposition and the sweetest temper in the world, she must have been spoiled, for both her parents idolised her. To see her every day was for Adrian a reward for all his labours, and in the midst of his greatest affairs he would always snatch a moment to think how he could contribute to her pleasure or her happiness. All that was rare and delightful and beautiful in the world was at her com-

mand. There was no limit to the gratification of her wishes. But, alas! this favoured maiden wished for nothing. Her books interested her, and a beautiful nature; but she liked to be alone, or with her mother. She was impressed with the horrible and humiliating conviction that she was courted and admired only for her wealth.

'What my daughter requires,' said Adrian, as he mused over those domestic contrarieties, 'is a companion of her own age. Her mother is the very worst constant companion she could have. She requires somebody with charm, and yet of a commanding mind; with youthful sympathy, and yet influencing her in the right way. It must be a person of birth and breeding and complete self-respect. I do not want to have any parasites in my house, or affected fine ladies. That would do no good. What I do want is a thing very difficult to procure. And yet they say everything is to be obtained. At least, I have always thought so, and found it so. I have the greatest opinion of an advertisement in the *Times*. I got some of my best clerks by advertisements in the *Times*. If I had consulted friends, there would have been no end of jobbing for such patronage. One could not trust, in such matters, one's own brother. I will draw up an advertisement and insert it in the *Times*. and have the references to my counting-house. I will think over the wording as I drive to town.' This was the wording:—

ADVERTISEMENT.

A BANKER and his Wife require a Companion for their only child, a young lady whose accomplishments and acquirements are already considerable. The friend that they would wish for her must be of

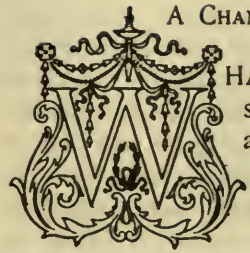
about the same age as herself, and in every other respect their lots will be the same. The person thus desired will be received and treated as a daughter of the house, will be allowed her own suite of apartments, her own servants and equipage. She must be a person of birth, breeding, and entire self-respect; with a mind and experience capable of directing conduct, and with manners which will engage sympathy.— Apply to H. H., 45 Bishopsgate Street Within.

This advertisement met the eye of Myra at Hurstley Rectory about a month after her father's death, and she resolved to answer it. Her reply pleased Mr. Neuchatel. He selected it out of hundreds, and placed himself in communication with Mr. Penruddock. The result was, that Miss Ferrars was to pay a visit to the Neuchatels; and if, on experience, they liked each other, the engagement was to take place.

In the meantime the good rector of Hurstley arrived on the previous evening with his precious charge at Hainault House; and was rewarded for his kind exertions, not only by the prospect of assisting Myra, but by some present experience of a splendid and unusual scene.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A Change in Myra's Fortunes.



'HAT do you think of her, mamma?' said Adriana, with glistening eyes, as she ran into Mrs. Neuchatel's dressing-room for a moment before dinner.

'I think her manners are perfect,' replied Mrs. Neuchatel; 'and as there can be no doubt, after all we have heard, of her principles, I think we are most fortunate. But what do you think of her, Adriana? For, after all, that is the main question.'

'I think she is divine,' said Adriana; 'but I fear she has no heart.'

'And why? Surely it is early to decide on such a matter as that!'

'When I took her to her room,' said Adriana, 'I suppose I was nervous; but I burst into tears, and threw my arms round her neck and embraced her, but she did not respond. She touched my forehead with her lips, and withdrew from my embrace.'

'She wished, perhaps, to teach you to control your emotions,' said Mrs. Neuchatel. 'You have known her only an hour, and you could not have done more to your own mother.'

It had been arranged that there should be no visitors to-day; only a nephew and a foreign consul-general, just to break the formality of the meeting. Mr. Neuchatel placed Myra next to himself at the round table, and treated her with marked consideration—cordial but courteous, and easy, with a certain degree of deference. His wife, who piqued herself on her perception of character, threw her brown velvet eyes on her neighbour, Mr. Penruddock, and cross-examined him in mystical whispers. She soon recognised his love of nature; and this allowed her to dissert on the subject, at once sublime and inexhaustible, with copiousness worthy of the theme. When she found he was an entomologist, and that it was not so much mountains as insects which interested him, she shifted her ground, but treated it with equal felicity. Strange, but nature is never so powerful as in insect life. The white ant can destroy fleets and cities, and the locusts erase a province. And then, how beneficent they are! Man would find it difficult to rival their exploits: the bee, that gives us honey; the worm, that gives us silk; the cochineal, that supplies our manufactures with their most brilliant dye.

Mr. Penruddock did not seem to know much about manufactures, but always recommended his cottagers to keep bees.

'The lime-tree abounds in our village, and there is nothing the bees love more than its blossoms.'

This direct reference to his village led Mrs. Neuchatel to an inquiry as to the state of the poor about Hurstley, and she made the inquiry in a tone of commiseration.

'Oh! we do pretty well,' said Mr. Penruddock.

'But how can a family live on ten or twelve shillings a week?' murmured Mrs. Neuchatel.

'There it is,' said Mr. Penruddock. 'A family has more than that. With a family the income proportionately increases.'

Mrs. Neuchatel sighed. 'I must say,' she said, 'I cannot help feeling there is something wrong in our present arrangements. When I sit down to dinner every day, with all these dishes, and remember that there are millions who never taste meat, I cannot resist the conviction that it would be better if there were some equal division, and all should have, if not much, at least something.'

'Nonsense, Emily!' said Mr. Neuchatel, who had an organ like Fine-ear, and could catch, when necessary, his wife's most mystical revelations. 'My wife, Mr. Penruddock, is a regular Communist. I hope you are not,' he added, with a smile, turning to Myra.

'I think life would be very insipid,' replied Myra, 'if all our lots were the same.'

When the ladies withdrew, Adriana and Myra walked out together hand-in-hand. Mr. Neuchatel rose and sat next to Mr. Penruddock, and began to talk politics. His reverend guest could not conceal his alarm about the position of the Church, and spoke of Lord John Russell's appropriation clause with well-bred horror.

'Well, I do not think there is much to be afraid of,' said Mr. Neuchatel. 'This is a liberal age, and you cannot go against it. The people must be educated, and where are the funds to come from? We must all do something, and the Church must contribute its share. You know I am a Liberal, but I am

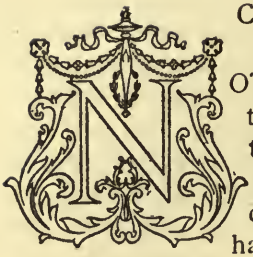
not for any rash courses. I am not at all sorry that Sir Robert Peel gained so much at the last general election. I like parties to be balanced. I am quite content with affairs. My friends, the Liberals, are in office, and, being there, they can do very little. That is the state of things, is it not, Melchior?' he added, with a smile to his nephew, who was an M.P. 'A balanced state of parties, and the house of Neuchatel with three votes—that will do. We poor City men get a little attention paid to us now, but before the dissolution three votes went for nothing. Now, shall we go and ask my daughter to give us a song?'

Mrs. Neuchatel accompanied her daughter on the piano, and after a time not merely on the instrument. The organ of each was fine and richly cultivated. It was choice chamber music. Mr. Neuchatel seated himself by Myra. His tone was more than kind, and his manner gentle. 'It is a little awkward the first day,' he said, 'among strangers, but that will wear off. You must bring your mind to feel that this is your home, and we shall all of us do everything in our power to convince you of it. Mr. Penruddock mentioned to me your wish, under present circumstances, to enter as little as possible into society, and this is a very social house. Your feeling is natural, and you will be in this matter entirely your own mistress. We shall always be glad to see you, but if you are not present we shall know and respect the cause. For my own part, I am one of those who would rather cherish affection than indulge grief, but every one must follow their mood. I hear you have a brother, to whom you are much attached; a twin, too, and they tell me strongly resembling you. He is in a public office, I believe? Now, understand this;

your brother can come here whenever he likes, without any further invitation. Ask him whenever you please. We shall always be glad to see him. No sort of notice is necessary. This is not a very small house, and we can always manage to find a bed and a cutlet for a friend.'

CHAPTER XXXII.

Colonel Albert.



OTHING could be more successful than the connection formed between the Neuchatel family and Myra Ferrars. Both parties to the compact were alike satisfied. Myra had 'got out of that hole' which she always hated; and though the new life she had entered was not exactly the one she had mused over, and which was founded on the tradition of her early experience, it was a life of energy and excitement, of splendour and power, with a total absence of petty vexations and miseries, affording neither time nor cause for the wearing chagrin of a monotonous and mediocre existence But the crowning joy of her emancipation was the prospect it offered of frequent enjoyment of the society of her brother.

With regard to the Neuchatels, they found in Myra everything they could desire. Mrs. Neuchatel was delighted with a companion who was not the daughter of a banker, and whose schooled intellect not only comprehended all her doctrines, however abstruse or fanciful, but who did not hesitate, if necessary, to controvert or even confute them. As for Adriana, she

literally idolised a friend whose proud spirit and clear intelligence were calculated to exercise a strong but salutary influence over her timid and sensitive nature. As for the great banker himself, who really had that faculty of reading character which his wife flattered herself she possessed, he had made up his mind about Myra from the first, both from her correspondence and her conversation. 'She has more common sense than any woman I ever knew, and more,' he would add, 'than most men. If she were not so handsome, people would find it out; but they cannot understand that so beautiful a woman can have a headpiece that, I really believe, could manage the affairs in Bishopsgate Street.'

In the meantime life at Hainault resumed its usual course; streams of guests, of all parties, colours, and classes, and even nations. Sometimes Mr. Neuchatel would say, 'I really must have a quiet day that Miss Ferrars may dine with us, and she shall ask her brother. How glad I shall be when she goes into half-mourning! I scarcely catch a glimpse of her.' And all this time his wife and daughter did nothing but quote her, which was still more irritating, for, as he would say, half-grumbling and half-smiling, 'If it had not been for me she would not have been here.'

At first Adriana would not dine at table without Myra, and insisted on sharing her imprisonment. 'It does not look like a cell,' said Myra, surveying, not without complacency, her beautiful little chamber, beautifully lit, with its silken hangings and carved ceiling and bright with books and pictures; 'besides, there is no reason why you should be a prisoner. You have not lost a father, and I hope never will.'

'Amen!' said Adriana; 'that would indeed be the unhappiest day of my life.'

'You cannot be in society too much in the latter part of the day,' said Myra. 'The mornings should be sacred to ourselves, but for the rest of the hours people are to see and to be seen, and,' she added, 'to like and to be liked.'

Adriana shook her head; 'I do not wish any one to like me but you.'

'I am sure I shall always like you, and love you,' said Myra, 'but I am equally sure that a great many other people will do the same.'

'It will not be myself that they like or love,' said Adriana with a sigh.

'Now spare me that vein, dear Adriana; you know I do not like it. It is not agreeable, and I do not think it is true. I believe that women are loved much more for themselves than is supposed. Besides, a woman should be content if she is loved; that is the point; and she is not to inquire how far the accidents of life have contributed to the result. Why should you not be loved for yourself? You have an interesting appearance. I think you very pretty. You have choice accomplishments and agreeable conversation and the sweetest temper in the world. You want a little self-conceit, my dear. If I were you and admired, I should never think of my fortune.'

'If you were the greatest heiress in the world, Myra, and were married, nobody would suppose for a moment that it was for your fortune.'

'Go down to dinner and smile upon everybody, and tell me about your conquests to-morrow. And say to your dear papa, that as he is so kind as to wish to see me, I will join them after dinner.'

And so, for the first two months, she occasionally appeared in the evening, especially when there was no formal party. Endymion came and visited her every Sunday, but he was also a social recluse, and though he had been presented to Mrs. Neuchatel and her daughter, and been most cordially received by them, it was some considerable time before he made the acquaintance of the great banker.

About September Myra may be said to have formally joined the circle at Hainault. Three months had elapsed since the terrible event, and she felt, irrespective of other considerations, her position hardly justified her, notwithstanding all the indulgent kindness of the family, in continuing a course of life which she was conscious to them was sometimes an inconvenience and always a disappointment. It was impossible to deny that she was interested and amused by the world which she now witnessed—so energetic, so restless, so various; so full of urgent and pressing life; never thinking of the past and quite heedless of the future, but worshipping an almighty present that sometimes seemed to roll on like the car of Juggernaut. She was much diverted by the gentlemen of the Stock Exchange, so acute, so audacious, and differing so much from the merchants in the style even of their dress, and in the ease, perhaps the too great facility, of their bearing. They called each other by their Christian names, and there were allusions to practical jokes which intimated a life something between a public school and a garrison. On more solemn days there were diplomatists and men in political office; sometimes great musical artists, and occasionally a French actor. But the dinners were always the same; dishes worthy of the great days of the Bourbons,

and wines of rarity and price, which could not ruin Neuchatel, for in many instances the vineyards belonged to himself.

One morning at breakfast, when he rarely encountered them, but it was a holiday in the city, Mr. Neuchatel said, 'There are a few gentlemen coming to dine here to-day whom you know, with one exception. He is a young man, a very nice young fellow. I have seen a good deal of him of late on business in the City, and have taken a fancy to him. He is a foreigner, but he was partly educated in this country and speaks English as well as any of us.'

'Then I suppose he is not a Frenchman,' said Mrs. Neuchatel, 'for they never speak English.'

'I shall not say what he is. You must all find out; I dare say Miss Ferrars will discover him; but, remember, you must all of you pay him great attention, for he is not a common person, I can assure you.'

'You are mysterious, Adrian,' said his wife, 'and quite pique our curiosity.'

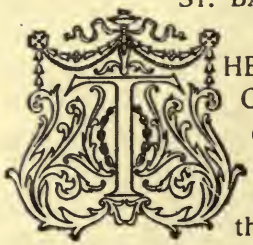
'Well, I wish somebody would pique mine,' said the banker. 'These holidays in the city are terrible things. I think I will go after breakfast and look at the new house, and I dare say Miss Ferrars will be kind enough to be my companion.'

Several of the visitors, fortunately for the banker whose time hung rather heavily on his hands, arrived an hour or so before dinner, that they might air themselves in the famous gardens and see some of the new plants. But the guest whom he most wished to greet, and whom the ladies were most curious to welcome, did not arrive. They had all entered the house and

the critical moment was at hand, when, just as dinner was about to be announced, the servants ushered in a young man of distinguished appearance, and the banker exclaimed, 'You have arrived just in time to take Mrs. Neuchatel in to dinner,' and he presented to her—Colonel Albert.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

St. Barbe in a New Rôle.



HE ladies were much interested by Colonel Albert. Mrs. Neuchatel exercised on him all the unrivalled arts by which she so unmistakably discovered character. She threw on him her brown velvet eyes with a subdued yet piercing beam, which would penetrate his most secret and even undeveloped intelligence. She asked questions in a hushed mystical voice, and as the colonel was rather silent and somewhat short in his replies, though ever expressed in a voice of sensibility and with refined deference of manner, Mrs. Neuchatel opened her own peculiar views on a variety of subjects of august interest, such as education, high art, the influence of women in society, the formation of character, and the distribution of wealth, on all of which this highly gifted lady was always in the habit of informing her audience, by way of accompaniment, that she was conscious that the views she entertained were peculiar. The views of Mrs. Neuchatel were peculiar, and therefore not always, or even easily, comprehended. That indeed she felt was rather her fate in life, but a superior intelli-

gence like hers has a degree of sublimated self-respect which defies destiny.

When she was alone with the ladies, the bulletin of Mrs. Neuchatel was not so copious as had been expected. She announced that Colonel Albert was sentimental, and she suspected a poet. But for the rest she had discovered nothing, not even his nationality. She had tried him both in French and German, but he persisted in talking English, although he spoke of himself as a foreigner. After dinner he conversed chiefly with the men, particularly with the Governor of the Bank, who seemed to interest him much, and a director of one of the dock companies, who offered to show him over their establishment, an offer which Colonel Albert eagerly accepted. Then, as if he remembered that homage was due at such a moment to the fairer sex, he went and seated himself by Adriana, and was playful and agreeable, though when she was cross-examined afterwards by her friends as to the character of his conversation, she really could not recall anything particular except that he was fond of horses, and said that he should like very much to take a ride with her. Just before he took his departure, Colonel Albert addressed Myra, and in a rather strange manner. He said, 'I have been puzzling myself all dinner, but I cannot help feeling that we have met before.'

Myra shook her head and said, 'I think that is impossible.'

'Well,' said the colonel with a look a little perplexed and not altogether satisfied, 'I suppose then it was a dream. May dreams so delightful,' and he bowed, 'never be wanting!'

'So you think he is a poet, Emily,' said Mr. Neuchatel when they had all gone. 'We have got a good

many of his papers in Bishopsgate Street, but I have not met with any verses in them yet.'

The visit of Colonel Albert was soon repeated, and he became a rather frequent guest at Hainault. It was evident that he was a favourite with Mr. Neuchatel. 'He knows very few people,' he would say, 'and I wish him to make some friends. Poor young fellow: he has had rather a hard life of it, and seen some service for such a youth. He is a perfect gentleman, and if he be a poet, Emily, that is all in your way. You like literary people, and are always begging that I should ask them. Well, next Saturday you will have a sort of a lion—one of the principal writers in *Scaramouch*. He is going to Paris as the foreign correspondent of the *Chuck-Farthing* with a thousand a year, and one of my friends in the Stock Exchange, who is his great ally, asked me to give him some letters. So he came to Bishopsgate Street—they all come to Bishopsgate Street—and I asked him to dine here on Saturday. By-the-bye, Miss Ferrars, ask your brother to come on the same day and stay with us till Monday. I will take him up to town with me quite in time for his office.'

This was the first time that Endymion had remained at Hainault. He looked forward to the visit with anticipations of great pleasure. Hainault, and all the people there, and everything about it, delighted him, and most of all the happiness of his sister and the consideration, and generosity, and delicate affection with which she was treated. One morning, to his astonishment, Myra had insisted upon his accepting from her no inconsiderable sum of money. 'It is no part of my salary,' she said, when he talked of

her necessities. 'Mr. Neuchatel said he gave it to me for outfit and to buy gloves. But being in mourning I want to buy nothing, and you, dear darling, must have many wants. Besides, Mrs. Neuchatel has made me so many presents that I really do not think that I shall ever want to buy anything again.'

It was rather a grand party at Hainault, such as Endymion had little experience of. There was a cabinet minister and his wife, not only an ambassador, but an ambassadress who had been asked to meet them, a nephew Neuchatel, the M.P. with a pretty young wife, and several apparently single gentlemen of note and position. Endymion was nervous when he entered, and more so because Myra was not in the room. But his trepidation was absorbed in his amazement when in the distance he observed St. Barbe, with a very stiff white cravat, and his hair brushed into unnatural order, and his whole demeanour forming a singular contrast to the rollicking cynicism of Joe's and the office.

Mr. Neuchatel presented St. Barbe to the lady of the mansion. 'Here is one of our great wits,' said the banker, 'and he is going to Paris, which is the capital of wits.' The critical moment prevented prolonged conversation, but the lady of the mansion did contrive to convey to St. Barbe her admiring familiarity with some of his effusions, and threw out a phrase which proved how finely she could distinguish between wit and humour.

Endymion at dinner sat between two M.P.s, whom his experience at the House of Commons allowed him to recognise. As he was a young man whom neither of them knew, neither of them addressed

him, but with delicate breeding carried on an active conversation across him, as if in fact he were not present. As Endymion had very little vanity, this did not at all annoy him. On the contrary, he was amused, for they spoke of matters with which he was not unacquainted, though he looked as if he knew or heard nothing. Their conversation was what is called 'shop:' all about the House and office; criticisms on speakers, speculations as to preferment, what Government would do about this, and how well Government got out of that.

Endymion was amused by seeing Myra, who was remote from him, sitting by St. Barbe, who, warmed by the banquet, was evidently holding forth without the slightest conception that his neighbour whom he addressed had long become familiar with his characteristics.

After dinner, St. Barbe pounced upon Endymion. 'Only think of our meeting here!' he said. 'I wonder why they asked you. You are not going to Paris, and you are not a wit. What a family this is!' he said; 'I had no idea of wealth before! Did you observe the silver plates? I could not hold mine with one hand, it was so heavy. I do not suppose there are such plates in the world. It gives one an idea of the galleons and Anson's plunder. But they deserve their wealth,' he added, 'nobody grudges it to them. I declare when I was eating that truffle, I felt a glow about my heart that, if it were not indigestion, I think must have been gratitude; though that is an article I had not believed in. He is a wonderful man, that Neuchatel. If I had only known him a year ago! I would have dedicated my novel to him. He is a sort of man who would have given

you a cheque immediately. He would not have read it, to be sure, but what of that? If you had dedicated it to a lord, the most he would have done would have been to ask you to dinner, and then perhaps cut up your work in one of the Quality reviews, and taken money for doing it out of our pockets! Oh! it's too horrid! There are some topsawyers here to-day, Ferrars! It would make Seymour Hicks's mouth water to be here. We should have had it in the papers, and he would have left us out of the list, and called us, etc. Now I dare say that ambassador has been blundering all his life, and yet there is something in that star and ribbon; I do not know how you feel, but I could almost go down on my knees to him. And there is a cabinet minister; well, we know what he is; I have been squibbing him for these two years, and now that I meet him I feel like a snob. Oh! there is an immense deal of superstition left in the world. I am glad they are going to the ladies. I am to be honoured by some conversation with the mistress of the house. She seems a firstrate woman, familiar with the glorious pages of a certain classic work, and my humble effusions. She praised one she thought I wrote, but between ourselves it was written by that fellow Seymour Hicks, who imitates me; but I would not put her right, as dinner might have been announced every moment. But she is a great woman, sir,—wonderful eyes! They are all great women here. I sat next to one of the daughters, or daughters-in-law, or nieces, I suppose. By Jove! it was tierce and quart. If you had been there, you would have been run through in a moment. I had to show my art. Now they are rising. I should not be surprised if Mr. Neuchatel

were to present me to some of the grandees. I believe them to be all impostors, but still it is pleasant to talk to a man with a star.

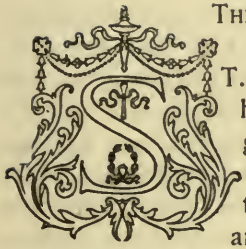
"Ye stars, which are the poetry of heaven,"

Byron wrote; a silly line; he should have written,

"Ye stars, which are the poetry of dress."'

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Count Otranto.



T. BARBE was not disappointed in his hopes. It was an evening of glorious success for him. He had even the honour of sitting for a time by the side of Mrs. Neuchatel, and being full of good claret, he, as he phrased it, showed his paces; that is to say, delivered himself of some sarcastic paradoxes duly blended with fulsome flattery. Later in the evening, he contrived to be presented both to the ambassador and the cabinet minister, and treated them as if they were demigods; listened to them as if with an admiration which he vainly endeavoured to repress; never spoke except to enforce and illustrate the views which they had condescended to intimate; successfully conveyed to his excellency that he was conversing with an enthusiast for his exalted profession; and to the minister that he had met an ardent sympathiser with his noble career. The ambassador was not dissatisfied with the impression he had made on one of the foreign correspondents of the *Chuck-Farthing,* and the minister flattered himself that both the literary and the graphic representations of him-

self in *Scaramouch* might possibly for the future be mitigated.

'I have done business to-night,' said St. Barbe to Endymion, towards the close of the evening. 'You did not know I had left the old shop? I kept it close. I could stand it no longer. One has energies, sir, though not recognised—at least not recognised much,' he added thoughtfully. 'But who knows what may happen? The age of mediocrity is not eternal. You see, this thing offered, and I saw an opening. It has come already. You saw the big-wigs all talking to me? I shall go to Paris now with some *éclat*. I shall invent a new profession; the literary diplomatist. The bore is, I know nothing about foreign politics. My line has been the other way. Never mind; I will read the *Débats* and the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and make out something. Foreign affairs are all the future, and my views may be as right as anybody else's; probably more correct, not so conventional. What a fool I was, Ferrars! I was asked to remain here to-night and refused! The truth is, I could not stand those powdered gentlemen, and I should have been under their care. They seem so haughty and supercilious. And yet I was wrong. I spoke to one of them very rudely just now, when he was handing coffee, to show I was not afraid, and he answered me like a seraph. I felt remorse.'

'Well, I have made the acquaintance of Mr. St. Barbe,' said Myra to Endymion. 'Strange as he is, he seemed quite familiar to me, and he was so full of himself that he never found me out. I hope some day to know Mr. Trenchard and Mr. Waldershare. Those I look upon as your chief friends.'

On the following afternoon, Adriana, Myra, and Endymion took a long walk together in the forest. The green glades in the autumnal woods were inviting, and sometimes they stood before the vast form of some doddered oak. The air was fresh and the sun was bright. Adriana was always gay and happy in the company of her adored Myra, and her happiness and her gaiety were not diminished by the presence of Myra's brother. So it was a lively and pleasant walk.

At the end of a long glade they observed a horseman followed by a groom approaching them. Endymion was some little way behind, gathering wild flowers for Adriana. Cantering along, the cavalier soon reached them, and then he suddenly pulled up his horse. It was Colonel Albert.

'You are walking, ladies? Permit me to join you,' and he was by their side. 'I delight in forests and in green alleys,' said Colonel Albert. 'Two wandering nymphs make the scene perfect.'

'We are not alone,' said Adriana, 'but our guardian is picking some wild flowers for us, which we fancied. I think it is time to return. You are going to Hainault, I believe, Colonel Albert, so we can all walk home together.'

So they turned, and Endymion with his graceful offering in a moment met them. Full of his successful quest, he offered with eager triumph the flowers to Adriana, without casting a glance at her new companion.

'Beautiful!' exclaimed Adriana, and she stopped to admire and arrange them. 'See, dear Myra, is not this lovely? How superior to anything in our glass-houses!'

Myra took the flower and examined it. Colonel Albert, who was silent, was watching all this time Endymion with intentness, who now looked up and encountered the gaze of the new comer. Their eyes met, their countenances were agitated, they seemed perplexed, and then it seemed that at the same time both extended their hands.

'It is a long time since we met,' said Colonel Albert, and he retained the hand of Endymion with affection. But Endymion, who was apparently much moved, said nothing, or rather only murmured an echo to the remarks of his new friend. And then they all walked on, but Myra fell a little back and made a signal to Endymion to join her.

'You never told me, darling, that you knew Colonel Albert.'

'Colonel Albert!' said Endymion, looking amazed, and then he added, 'Who is Colonel Albert?'

'That gentleman before us,' said Myra.

'That is the Count of Otranto, whose fag I was at Eton.'

'The Count of Otranto!'

CHAPTER XXXV.

The Mystery Deepens.

COLONEL ALBERT from this day became an object of increased and deeper interest to Myra. His appearance and manners had always been attractive, and the mystery connected with him was not calculated to diminish curiosity in his conduct or fate. But when she discovered that he was the unseen hero of her childhood, the being who had been kind to her Endymion in what she had ever considered the severest trial of her brother's life, had been his protector from those who would have oppressed him, and had cherished him in the desolate hour of his delicate and tender boyhood, her heart was disturbed. How often had they talked together of the Count of Otranto, and how often had they wondered who he was! His memory had been a delightful mystery to them in their Berkshire solitude, and Myra recalled with a secret smile the numberless and ingenious inquiries by which she had endeavoured to elicit from her brother some clue as to his friend, or to discover some detail which might guide her to a conclusion. Endymion had known nothing, and was clear always

that the Count of Otranto must have been, and was, an English boy. And now the Count of Otranto called himself Colonel Albert, and though he persisted in speaking English, had admitted to Mrs. Neuchatel that he was a foreigner.

Who was he? She resolved, when she had an opportunity, to speak to the great banker on the subject.

'Do you know, Mr. Neuchatel,' she said, 'that Endymion, my brother, was at school with Colonel Albert?'

'Ah, ah!' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'But when he was at school he had another name,' said Myra.

'Oh, oh!' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'He was then called the Count of Otranto.'

'That is a very pretty name,' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'But why did he change it?' asked Myra.

'The great world often change their names,' said Mr. Neuchatel. 'It is only poor city men like myself who are always called Mr., and bear the same name as their fathers.'

'But when a person is called a count when he is a boy, he is seldom called only a colonel when he is a man,' said Myra. 'There is a great mystery in all this.'

'I should not be surprised,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'if he were to change his name again before this time year.'

'Why?' asked Myra.

'Well, when I have read all his papers in Bishopsgate Street, perhaps I shall be able to tell you,' said Mr. Neuchatel, and Myra felt that she could pursue the theme no further.

She expected that Endymion would in time be able to obtain this information, but it was not so. In their first private conversation after their meeting in the forest, Endymion had informed Colonel Albert that, though they had met now for the first time since his return, they had been for some time lodgers in London under the same roof. Colonel Albert smiled when Endymion told him this; then falling into thought, he said: 'I hope we may often meet, but for the moment it may be as well that the past should be known only to ourselves. I wish my life for the present to be as private as I can arrange it. There is no reason why we should not be sometimes together—that is, when you have leisure. I had the pleasure of making your acquaintance at my banker's.'

Parliament had been dissolved through the demise of the Crown in the summer of this year (1837), and London society had been prematurely broken up. Waldershare had left town early in July to secure his election, in which he was successful, with no intention of settling again in his old haunts till the meeting of the new House of Commons, which was to be in November. The Rodneys were away at some Kentish watering-place during August and September, exhibiting to an admiring world their exquisitely made dresses, and enjoying themselves amazingly at balls and assemblies at the public rooms. The resources of private society also were not closed to them.

Mr. and Mrs. Gamme were there and gave immense dinners, and the airy Mrs. Hooghley, who laughed a little at the Gammes' substantial gatherings and herself improvised charming picnics. So there was really little embarrassment in the social relations between Colonel Albert and Endymion. They resolved

themselves chiefly into arranging joint expeditions to Hainault. Endymion had a perpetual invitation there, and it seemed that the transactions between Mr. Neuchatel and the colonel required much conference, for the banker always expected him, although it was well known that they met not unfrequently in Bishopsgate Street in the course of the week. Colonel Albert and Endymion always stayed at Hainault from Saturday till Monday. It delighted the colonel to mount Endymion on one of his choice steeds, and his former fag enjoyed all this amazingly.

Colonel Albert became domiciled at Hainault. The rooms which were occupied by him when there were always reserved for him. He had a general invitation, and might leave his luggage and books and papers behind him. It was evident that the family pleased him. Between Mr. Neuchatel and himself there were obviously affairs of great interest; but it was equally clear that he liked the female members of the family—all of them; and all liked him. And yet it cannot be said that he was entertaining, but there are some silent people who are more interesting than the best talkers. And when he did speak he always said the right thing. His manners were tender and gentle; he had an unobtrusive sympathy with all they said or did, except, indeed, and that was not rarely, when he was lost in profound abstraction.

'I delight in your friend the colonel, Adrian,' said Mrs. Neuchatel, 'but I must say he is very absent.'

'He has a good deal to think about,' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'I wonder what it can be,' thought Myra.

'He has a claim to a great estate,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'and he has to think of the best mode of

establishing it; and he has been deprived of great honours, and he believes unjustly, and he wishes to regain them.'

'No wonder, then, he is absent,' said Mrs. Neuchatel. 'If he only knew what a burthen great wealth is, I am sure he would not wish to possess it, and as for honours, I never could make out why having a title or a ribbon could make any difference in a human being.'

'Nonsense, my dear Emily,' said Mr. Neuchatel. 'Great wealth is a great blessing to a man who knows what to do with it, and as for honours, they are inestimable to the honourable.'

'Well, I ardently hope Colonel Albert may succeed,' said Myra, 'because he was so kind to my brother at Eton. He must have a good heart.'

'They say he is the most unscrupulous of living men,' said Mr. Neuchatel, with his peculiar smile.

'Good heavens!' exclaimed Mrs. Neuchatel.

'How terrible!' said Adriana. 'It cannot be true.'

'Perhaps he is the most determined,' said Myra. 'Moral courage is the rarest of qualities, and often maligned.'

'Well, he has got a champion,' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'I ardently wish him success,' said Myra, 'in all his undertakings. I only wish I knew what they were.'

'Has not he told your brother, Miss Ferrars?' asked Mr. Neuchatel, with laughing eyes.

'He never speaks of himself to Endymion,' said Myra.

'He speaks a good deal of himself to me,' said Mr. Neuchatel; 'and he is going to bring a friend

here to-morrow who knows more about his affairs even than I do. So you will have a very good opportunity, Miss Ferrars, of making yourself acquainted with them, particularly if you sit next to him at dinner, and are very winning.'

The friend of Colonel Albert was Baron Sergius, the baron who used to visit him in London at twilight in a dark brougham. Mrs. Neuchatel was greatly taken by his appearance, by the calmness of his mien, his unstudied politeness, and his measured voice. He conversed with her entirely at dinner on German philosophy, of which he seemed a complete master, explained to her the different schools, and probably the successful ones, and imparted to her that precise knowledge which she required on the subject, and which she had otherwise been unable to obtain. It seemed, too, that he personally knew all the famous professors, and he intimated their doctrines not only with profound criticism, but described their persons and habits with vividness and picturesque power, never, however, all this time, by any chance raising his voice, the tones of which were ever distinct and a little precise.

'Is this the first visit of your friend to this country?' asked Myra of Colonel Albert.

'Oh, no; he has been here often — and everywhere,' added Colonel Albert.

'Everywhere! he must be a most interesting companion then.'

'I find him so: I never knew any one whom I thought equal to him. But perhaps I am not an impartial judge, for I have known him so long and so intimately. In fact, I have never been out of his sight till I was brought over to this country to be placed

at Eton. He is the counsellor of our family, and we all of us have ever agreed that if his advice had been always followed we should never have had a calamity.'

'Indeed, a gifted person! Is he a soldier?'

'No; Baron Sergius has not followed the profession of arms.'

'He looks a diplomatist.'

'Well, he is now nothing but my friend,' said the colonel. 'He might have been anything, but he is a peculiarly domestic character, and is devoted to private life.'

'You are fortunate in such a friend.'

'Well, I am glad to be fortunate in something,' said Colonel Albert.

'And are you not fortunate in everything?'

'I have not that reputation; but I shall be more than fortunate if I have your kind wishes.'

'Those you have,' said Myra, rather eagerly. 'My brother taught me, even as a child, to wish nothing but good for you. I wish I knew only what I was to wish for.'

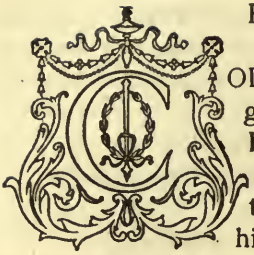
'Wish that my plans may succeed,' said Colonel Albert, looking round to her with interest.

'I will more than wish,' said Myra; 'I will believe that they will succeed, because I think you have resolved to succeed.'

'I shall tell Endymion when I see him,' said Colonel Albert, 'that his sister is the only person who has read my character.'

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Baron Sergius.



COLONEL ALBERT and Baron Sergius drove up in their landau from Hainault while Endymion was at the door in Warwick Street, returning home. The colonel saluted him cordially, and said, 'The baron is going to take a cup of coffee with me; join us.' So they went upstairs. There was a packet on the table, which seemed to catch the colonel's eye immediately, and he at once opened it with eagerness. It contained many foreign newspapers. Without waiting for the servant who was about to bring candles, the colonel lighted a taper on the table with a lucifer, and then withdrew into the adjoining chamber, opening, however, with folding doors to the principal and spacious apartment.

'A foreign newspaper always interests our friend,' said the baron, taking his coffee.

'Well, it must always be interesting to have news from home, I suppose,' said Endymion.

'Home!' said the baron. 'News is always interesting, whether it come from home or not.'

'To public men,' said Endymion, sipping his coffee.

'To all men if they be wise,' said the baron; 'as a general rule, the most successful man in life is the man who has the best information.'

'But what a rare thing is success in life!' said Endymion. 'I often wonder whether I shall ever be able to step out of the crowd.'

'You may have success in life without stepping out of the crowd,' said the baron.

'A sort of success,' said Endymion; 'I know what you mean. But what I mean is real success in life. I mean, I should like to be a public man.'

'Why?' asked the baron.

'Well, I should like to have power,' said Endymion, blushing.

'The most powerful men are not public men,' said the baron. 'A public man is responsible, and a responsible man is a slave. It is private life that governs the world. You will find this out some day. The world talks much of powerful sovereigns and great ministers; and if being talked about made one powerful, they would be irresistible. But the fact is, the more you are talked about the less powerful you are.'

'But surely King Luitbrand is a powerful monarch; they say he is the wisest of men. And the Emperor Harold, who has succeeded in everything. And as for ministers, who is a great man if it be not Prince Wenceslaus?'

'King Luitbrand is governed by his doctor, who is capable of governing Europe, but has no ambition that way; the Emperor Harold is directed by his mistress, who is a woman of a certain age with a vast sagacity, but who also believes in sorcery; and as for Prince Wenceslaus, he is inspired by an individual as

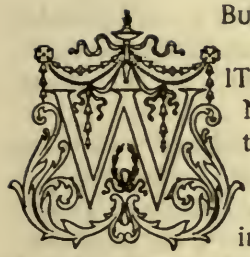
obscure as ourselves, and who, for aught I know, may be, at this moment, like ourselves, drinking a cup of coffee in a hired lodging.'

'What you say about public life amazes me,' said Endymion musingly.

'Think over it,' said the baron. 'As an Englishman, you will have difficulty in avoiding public life. But at any rate do not at present be discontented that you are unknown. It is the first condition of real power. When you have succeeded in life according to your views, and I am inclined to believe you will so succeed, you will, some day, sigh for real power, and denounce the time when you became a public man, and belonged to any one but yourself. But our friend calls me. He has found something startling. I will venture to say, if there be anything in it, it has been brought about by some individual of whom you never heard.'

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Budding Politicians.



ITH the assembling of Parliament in November recommenced the sittings of the Union Society, of which Endymion had for some time been a member, and of whose meetings he was a constant and critical, though silent, attendant. There was a debate one night on the government of dependencies, which, although all reference to existing political circumstances was rigidly prohibited, no doubt had its origin in the critical state of one of our most important colonies, then much embarrassing the metropolis. The subject was one which Endymion had considered, and on which he had arrived at certain conclusions. The meeting was fully attended, and the debate had been conducted with a gravity becoming the theme.

Endymion was sitting in the rear, and with no companion near him with whom he was acquainted, when he rose and solicited the attention of the president. Another and a well-known speaker had also risen, and been called, but there was a cry of 'new member,' a courteous cry, borrowed from the House of Commons, and Endymion for the first time heard

his own voice in public. He has since admitted, though he has been through many trying scenes, that it was the most nervous moment of his life. 'After Calais,' as a wise wit said, 'nothing surprises;' and the first time a man speaks in public, even if only at a debating society, is also the unequalled incident in its way. The indulgence of the audience supported him while the mist cleared from his vision, and his palpitating heart subsided into comparative tranquillity. After a few pardonable incoherencies, he was launched into his subject, and spoke with the thoughtful fluency which knowledge alone can sustain. For knowledge is the foundation of eloquence.

'What a good-looking young fellow!' whispered Mr. Bertie Tremaine to his brother Mr. Tremaine Bertie. The Bertie Tremaines were the two greatest swells of the Union, and had a party of their own. 'And he speaks well.'

'Who is he?' inquired Mr. Tremaine Bertie of their other neighbour.

'He is a clerk in the Treasury, I believe, or something of that sort,' was the reply.

'I never saw such a good-looking young fellow,' said Mr. Bertie Tremaine. 'He is worth getting hold of. I shall ask to be introduced to him when we break up.'

Accordingly, Mr. Bertie Tremaine, who was always playing at politics, and who, being two-and-twenty, was discontented because he was not Chancellor of the Exchequer like Mr. Pitt, whispered to a gentleman who sat behind him, and was, in short, the whip of his section, and signified, as a minister of state would, that an introduction to Mr. Ferrars should be arranged.

So when the meeting broke up, of which Mr. Ferrars' maiden speech was quite the event, and while he was contemplating, not without some fair self-complacency, walking home with Trenchard, Endymion found himself encompassed by a group of bowing forms and smiling countenances, and, almost before he was aware of it, had made the acquaintance of the great Mr. Bertie Tremaine, and received not only the congratulations of that gentleman, but an invitation to dine with him on the morrow; 'quite *sans façon.*'

Mr. Bertie Tremaine, who had early succeeded to the family estate, lived in Grosvenor Street, and in becoming style. His house was furnished with luxury and some taste. The host received his guests in a library, well stored with political history and political science, and adorned with the busts of celebrated statesmen and of profound political sages. Bentham was the philosopher then affected by young gentlemen of ambition, and who wished to have credit for profundity and hard heads. Mr. Bertie Tremaine had been the proprietor of a close borough, which for several generations had returned his family to Parliament, the faithful supporters of Pitt, and Perceval, and Liverpool, and he had contemplated following the same line, though with larger and higher objects than his ancestors. Being a man of considerable and versatile ability, and of ample fortune, with the hereditary opportunity which he possessed, he had a right to aspire, and, as his vanity more than equalled his talents, his estimate of his own career was not mean. Unfortunately, before he left Harrow, he was deprived of his borough, and this catastrophe eventually occasioned a considerable change in the views and conduct of Mr. Bertie Tremaine. In the confusion of parties and po-

litical thought which followed the Reform Act of Lord Grey, an attempt to govern the country by the assertion of abstract principles, and which it was now beginning to be the fashion to call Liberalism, seemed the only opening to public life; and Mr. Bertie Tremaine, who piqued himself on recognising the spirit of the age, adopted Liberal opinions with that youthful fervour which is sometimes called enthusiasm, but which is a heat of imagination subsequently discovered to be inconsistent with the experience of actual life.

At Cambridge Mr. Bertie Tremaine was at first the solitary pupil of Bentham, whose principles he was prepared to carry to their extreme consequences, but being a man of energy and in possession of a good estate, he soon found followers, for the sympathies of youth are quick, and, even with an original bias, it is essentially mimetic. When Mr. Bertie Tremaine left the university he found in the miscellaneous elements of the London Union many of his former companions of school and college, and from them, and the new world to which he was introduced, it delighted him to form parties and construct imaginary cabinets. His brother Augustus, who was his junior only by a year, and was destined to be a diplomatist, was an efficient assistant in these enterprises, and was one of the guests who greeted Endymion when he arrived next day in Grosvenor Street according to his engagement. The other three were Hortensius, the whip of the party, and Mr. Trenchard.

The dinner was refined, for Mr. Bertie Tremaine combined the sybarite with the utilitarian sage, and it secretly delighted him to astonish or embarrass an austere brother republican by the splendour of his fam-

ily plate or the polished appointments of his household. To-day the individual to be influenced was Endymion, and the host, acting up to his ideal of a first minister, addressed questions to his companions on the subjects which were peculiarly their own, and, after eliciting their remarks, continued or completed the treatment of the theme with adequate ability, though in a manner authoritative, and, as Endymion thought, a little pompous. What amused him most in this assemblage of youth was their earnest affectation of public life. The freedom of their comments on others was only equalled by their confidence in themselves.

Endymion, who only spoke when he was spoken to, had casually remarked in answer to one of the observations which his host with elaborate politeness occasionally addressed to him, that he thought it was unpatriotic to take a certain course. Mr. Bertie Tremaine immediately drew up, and said, with a deep smile, that he comprehended philanthropy, but patriotism he confessed he did not understand; and thereupon delivered himself of an address on the subject which might have been made in the Union, and which communicated to the astonished Endymion that patriotism was a false idea, and entirely repugnant to the principles of the new philosophy. As all present were more or less impregnated with these tenets, there was no controversy on the matter. Endymion remained discreetly silent, and Augustus — Mr. Bertie Tremaine's brother — who sat next to him, and whose manners were as sympathising as his brother's were autocratic, whispered in a wheedling tone that it was quite true, and that the idea of patriotism was entirely relinquished except by a few old-fashioned folks who clung to superstitious phrases.

Hortensius, who seemed the only person who presumed to meet Mr. Bertie Tremaine in conversation on equal terms, and who had already astonished Endymion by what that inexperienced youth deemed the extreme laxity of his views, both social and political, evinced, more than once, a disposition to deviate into the lighter topics of feminine character, and even the fortunes of the hazard-table; but the host looked severe, and was evidently resolved that the conversation to-day should resemble the expression of his countenance. After dinner they returned to the library, and most of them smoked, but Mr. Bertie Tremaine, inviting Endymion to seat himself by his side on a sofa at the farther end of the room, observed, 'I suppose you are looking to Parliament?'

'Well, I do not know,' said the somewhat startled Endymion; 'I have not thought much about it, and I have not yet reached a parliamentary age.'

'A man cannot enter Parliament too soon,' said Mr. Bertie Tremaine; 'I hope to enter this session. There will be a certain vacancy on a petition, and I have arranged to have the seat.'

'Indeed!' said Endymion. 'My father was in Parliament, and so was my grandfather, but I confess I do not very well see my way there.'

'You must connect yourself with a party,' said Mr. Bertie Tremaine, 'and you will soon enter; and being young, you should connect yourself with the party of the future. The country is wearied with the present men, who have no philosophical foundation, and are therefore perpetually puzzled and inconsistent, and the country will not stand the old men, as it is resolved against retrogression. The party of the future and of the speedy future has its headquarters

under this roof, and I should like to see you belong to it.'

'You are too kind,' murmured Endymion.

'Yes, I see in you the qualities adapted to public life, and which may be turned to great account. I must get you into Parliament as soon as you are eligible,' continued Mr. Bertie Tremaine in a musing tone. 'This death of the King was very inopportune. If he had reigned a couple of years more, I saw my way to half a dozen seats, and I could have arranged with Lord Durham.'

'That was unfortunate,' said Endymion.

'What do you think of Hortensius?' inquired Mr. Bertie Tremaine.

'I think him the most brilliant speaker I know,' said Endymion. 'I never met him in private society before; he talks well.'

'He wants conduct,' said Mr. Bertie Tremaine. 'He ought to be my Lord Chancellor, but there is a tone of levity about him which is unfortunate. Men destined to the highest places should beware of badinage.'

'I believe it is a dangerous weapon.'

'All lawyers are loose in their youth, but an insular country subject to fogs, and with a powerful middle class, requires grave statesmen. I attribute a great deal of the nonsense called Conservative Reaction to Peel's solemnity. The proper minister for England at this moment would be Pitt. Extreme youth gives hope to a country; coupled with ceremonious manners, hope soon assumes the form of confidence.'

'Ah!' murmured Endymion.

'I had half a mind to ask Jawett to dinner to-day. His powers are unquestionable, but he is not a prac-

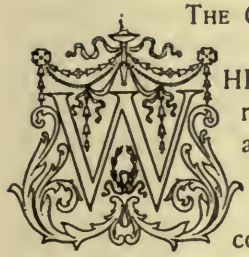
tical man. For instance, I think myself our colonial empire is a mistake, and that we should disembarrass ourselves of its burthen as rapidly as is consistent with the dignity of the nation; but were Jawett in the House of Commons to-morrow, nothing would satisfy him but a resolution for the total and immediate abolition of the empire, with a preamble denouncing the folly of our fathers in creating it. Jawett never spares any one's self-love.'

'I know him very well,' said Endymion; 'he is in my office. He is very uncompromising.'

'Yes,' said Mr. Bertie Tremaine musingly; 'if I had to form a government, I could hardly offer him the cabinet.' Then speaking more rapidly, he added, 'The man you should attach yourself to is my brother Augustus — Mr. Tremaine Bertie. There is no man who understands foreign politics like Augustus, and he is a thorough man of the world.'

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Great Man Arrives.



HEN Parliament reassembled in February, the Neuchatels quitted Hainault for their London residence in Portland Place. Mrs. Neuchatel was sadly troubled at leaving her country home, which, notwithstanding its distressing splendour, had still some forms of compensatory innocence in its flowers and sylvan glades. Adriana sighed when she called to mind the manifold and mortifying snares and pitfalls that awaited her, and had even framed a highly practical and sensible scheme which would permit her parents to settle in town and allow Myra and herself to remain permanently in the country; but Myra brushed away the project like a fly, and Adriana yielding, embraced her with tearful eyes.

The Neuchatel mansion in Portland Place was one of the noblest in that comely quarter of the town, and replete with every charm and convenience that wealth and taste could provide. Myra, who, like her brother, had a tenacious memory, was interested in recalling as fully and as accurately as possible her previous experience of London life. She was then

indeed only a child, but a child who was often admitted to brilliant circles, and had enjoyed opportunities of social observation which the very youthful seldom possess. Her retrospection was not as profitable as she could have desired, and she was astonished, after a severe analysis of the past, to find how entirely at that early age she appeared to have been engrossed with herself and with Endymion. Hill Street and Wimbledon, and all their various life, figured as shadowy scenes; she could realise nothing very definite for her present guidance; the past seemed a phantom of fine dresses, and bright equipages, and endless indulgence. All that had happened after their fall was distinct and full of meaning. It would seem that adversity had taught Myra to feel and think.

Forty years ago the great financiers had not that commanding, not to say predominant, position in society which they possess at present, but the Neuchatels were an exception to this general condition. They were a family which not only had the art of accumulating wealth, but of expending it with taste and generosity — an extremely rare combination. Their great riches, their political influence, their high integrity and their social accomplishments, combined to render their house not only splendid, but interesting and agreeable, and gave them a great hold upon the world. At first the fine ladies of their political party called on them as a homage of condescending gratitude for the public support which the Neuchatel family gave to their sons and husbands, but they soon discovered that this amiable descent from their Olympian heights on their part did not amount exactly to the sacrifice or service which they had

contemplated. They found their host as refined as themselves, and much more magnificent, and in a very short time it was not merely the wives of ambassadors and ministers of state that were found at the garden fêtes of Hainault, or the balls, and banquets, and concerts of Portland Place, but the fitful and capricious realm of fashion surrendered like a fair country conquered, as it were, by surprise. To visit the Neuchatels became the mode; all solicited to be their guests, and some solicited in vain.

Although it was only February, the world began to move, and some of the ministers' wives, who were socially strong enough to venture on such a step, received their friends. Mr. Neuchatel particularly liked this form of society. 'I cannot manage balls,' he used to say, 'but I like a ministerial reception. There is some chance of sensible conversation and doing a little business. I like talking with ambassadors after dinner. Besides, in this country you meet the leaders of the opposition, because, as they are not invited by the minister, but by his wife, anybody can come without committing himself.'

Myra, faithful to her original resolution not to enter society while she was in mourning, declined all the solicitations of her friends to accompany them to these assemblies. Mrs. Neuchatel always wished Myra should be her substitute, and it was only at Myra's instance that Adriana accompanied her parents. In the meantime, Myra saw much of Endymion. He was always a welcome guest by the family, and could call upon his sister at all the odds and ends of time that were at his command, and chat with her at pleasant ease in her pretty room. Sometimes they walked out together, and sometimes they went to-

gether to see some exhibition that everybody went to see. Adriana became almost as intimate with Endymion as his sister, and altogether the Neuchatel family became by degrees to him as a kind of home. Talking with Endymion, Myra heard a good deal of Colonel Albert, for he was her brother's hero—but she rarely saw that gentleman. She was aware from her brother, and from some occasional words of Mr. Neuchatel, that the great banker still saw Colonel Albert and not unfrequently, but the change of residence from Hainault to London made a difference in their mode of communication. Business was transacted in Bishopsgate Street, and no longer combined with a pleasant ride to an Essex forest. More than once Colonel Albert had dined in Portland Place, but at irregular and miscellaneous parties. Myra observed that he was never asked to meet the grand personages who attended the celebrated banquets of Mr. Neuchatel. And why not? His manners were distinguished, and his whole bearing that of one accustomed to consideration. The irrepressible curiosity of woman impelled her once to feel her way on the subject with Mr. Neuchatel, but with the utmost dexterity and delicacy.

'No,' said Mr. Neuchatel with a laughing eye, which saw through everybody's purpose, though his own manner was one of simplicity amounting almost to innocence, 'I did not say Colonel Albert was going to dine here on Wednesday; I have asked him to dine here on Sunday. On Wednesday I am going to have the premier and some of his colleagues. I must insist upon Miss Ferrars dining at table. You will meet Lord Roehampton; all the ladies admire him and he admires all the ladies. It will not do to

ask Colonel Albert to meet such a party, though perhaps,' added Mr. Neuchatel with a merry smile, 'some day they may be asked to meet Colonel Albert. Who knows, Miss Ferrars? The wheel of Fortune turns round very strangely.'

'And who, then, is Colonel Albert?' asked Myra with decision.

'Colonel Albert is Colonel Albert, and nobody else, so far as I know,' replied Mr. Neuchatel; 'he has brought a letter of credit on my house in that name, and I am happy to honour his drafts to the amount in question, and as he is a foreigner, I think it is but kind and courteous occasionally to ask him to dinner.'

Miss Ferrars did not pursue the inquiry, for she was sufficiently acquainted with Mr. Neuchatel to feel that he did not intend to gratify her curiosity.

The banquet of the Neuchatels to the premier, and some of the principal ambassadors and their wives, and to those of the premier's colleagues who were fashionable enough to be asked, and to some of the dukes and duchesses and other ethereal beings who supported the ministry, was the first event of the season. The table blazed with rare flowers and rarer porcelain and precious candelabra of sculptured beauty glittering with light; the gold plate was less remarkable than the delicate ware that had been alike moulded and adorned for a Du Barry or a Marie Antoinette, and which now found a permanent and peaceful home in the proverbial land of purity and order; and amid the stars and ribbons, not the least remarkable feature of the whole was Mr. Neuchatel himself, seated at the centre of his table, alike free from ostentation or over-deference, talking to the great

ladies on each side of him, as if he had nothing to do in life but whisper in gentle ears, and partaking of his own dainties as if he were eating bread and cheese at a country inn.

Perhaps Mrs. Neuchatel might have afforded a companion picture. Partly in deference to their host, and partly because this evening the first dance of the season was to be given, the great ladies in general wore their diamonds, and Myra was amused as she watched their dazzling tiaras and flashing rivières, while not a single ornament adorned the graceful presence of their hostess, who was more content to be brilliant only by her conversation. As Mr. Neuchatel had only a few days before presented his wife with another diamond necklace, he might be excused were he slightly annoyed. Nothing of the sort; he only shrugged his shoulders, and said to his nephew, 'Your aunt must feel that I give her diamonds from love and not from vanity, as she never lets me have the pleasure of seeing them.' The sole ornament of Adriana was an orchid, which had arrived that morning from Hainault, and she had presented its fellow to Myra.

There was one lady who much attracted the attention of Myra, interested in all she observed. This lady was evidently a person of importance, for she sat between an ambassador and a knight of the garter, and they vied in homage to her. They watched her every word, and seemed delighted with all she said. Without being strictly beautiful, there was an expression of sweet animation in her physiognomy which was highly attractive: her eye was full of summer lightning, and there was an arch dimple in her smile, which seemed to irradiate her whole coun-

tenance. She was quite a young woman, hardly older than Myra. What most distinguished her was the harmony of her whole person; her graceful figure, her fair and finely moulded shoulders, her pretty teeth, and her small extremities, seemed to blend with and become the soft vivacity of her winning glance.

'Lady Montfort looks well to-night,' said the neighbour of Myra.

'And is that Lady Montfort? Do you know, I never saw her before.'

'Yes; that is the famous Berengaria, the Queen of Society, and the genius of Whiggism.'

In the evening, a great lady, who was held to have the finest voice in society, favoured them with a splendid specimen of her commanding skill, and then Adriana was induced to gratify her friends with a song, 'only one song,' and that only on condition that Myra should accompany her. Miss Neuchatel had a sweet and tender voice, and it had been finely cultivated; she would have been more than charming if she had only taken interest in anything she herself did, or believed for a moment that she could interest others. When she ceased, a gentleman approached the instrument and addressed her in terms of sympathy and deferential praise. Myra recognised the Knight of the Garter who had sat next to Lady Montfort. He was somewhat advanced in middle life, tall and of a stately presence, with a voice more musical even than the tones which had recently enchanted every one. His countenance was impressive, a truly Olympian brow, but the lower part of the face indicated not feebleness, but flexibility, and his mouth was somewhat sensuous. His manner was at

once winning; natural, and singularly unaffected, and seemed to sympathise entirely with those whom he addressed.

'But I have never been at Hainault,' said the gentleman, continuing a conversation, 'and therefore could not hear the nightingales. I am content you have brought one of them to town.'

'Nightingales disappear in June,' said Miss Ferrars; 'so our season will be short.'

'And where do they travel to?' asked the gentleman.

'Ah! that is a mystery,' said Myra. 'You must ask Miss Neuchatel.'

'But she will not tell me,' said the gentleman, for in truth Miss Neuchatel, though he had frequently addressed her, had scarcely opened her lips.

'Tell your secret, Adriana,' said Miss Ferrars, trying to force her to converse.

'Adriana!' said the gentleman. 'What a beautiful name! You look with that flower, Miss Neuchatel, like a bride of Venice.'

'Nay,' said Myra; 'the bride of Venice was a stormy ocean.'

'And have you a Venetian name?' asked the gentleman.

There was a pause, and then Miss Neuchatel, with an effort, murmured, 'She has a very pretty name. Her name is Myra.'

'She seems to deserve it,' said the gentleman.

'So you like my daughter's singing,' said Mr. Neuchatel, coming up to them. 'She does not much like singing in public, but she is a very good girl, and always gives me a song when I come home from business.'

'Fortunate man!' said the gentleman. 'I wish somebody would sing to me when I come home from business.'

'You should marry, my lord,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'and get your wife to sing to you. Is it not so, Miss Ferrars? By-the-bye, I ought to introduce you to — Lord Roehampton.'

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Lady Montfort's Plans.

THE Earl of Roehampton was the strongest member of the government, except, of course, the premier himself. He was the man from whose combined force and flexibility of character the country had confidence that in all their councils there would be no lack of courage, yet tempered with adroit discretion. Lord Roehampton, though an Englishman, was an Irish peer, and was resolved to remain so, for he fully appreciated the position, which united social distinction with the power of a seat in the House of Commons. He was a very ambitious, and, as it was thought, worldly man, deemed even by many to be unscrupulous, and yet he was romantic. A great favourite in society, and especially with the softer sex, somewhat late in life he had married suddenly a beautiful woman, who was without fortune, and not a member of the enchanted circle in which he flourished. The union had been successful, for Lord Roehampton was gifted with a sweet temper, and, though people said he had no heart, with a winning tenderness of disposition, or at least of manner, which at

the same time charmed and soothed. He had been a widower for two years, and the world was of opinion that he ought to marry again, and form this time a becoming alliance. In addition to his many recommendations he had now the inestimable reputation, which no one had even contemplated for him, of having been a good husband.

Berengaria, Countess of Montfort, was a great friend of Lord Roehampton. She was accustomed to describe herself as 'the last of his conquests,' and though Lord Roehampton read characters and purposes with a glance, and was too sagacious to be deceived by any one, even by himself, his gratified taste, for he scarcely had vanity, cherished the bright illusion of which he was conscious, and he responded to Lady Montfort half sportively, half seriously, with an air of flattered devotion. Lord Roehampton had inherited an ample estate, and he had generally been in office; for he served his apprenticeship under Perceval and Liverpool, and changed his party just in time to become a member of the Cabinet of 1831. Yet with all these advantages, whether it were the habit of his life, which was ever profuse, or that neglect of his private interests which almost inevitably accompanies the absorbing duties of public life, his affairs were always somewhat confused, and Lady Montfort, who wished to place him on a pinnacle, had resolved that he should marry an heiress. After long observation and careful inquiry and prolonged reflection, the lady she had fixed upon was Miss Neuchatel; and she it was who had made Lord Roehampton cross the room and address Adriana after her song.

'He is not young,' reasoned Lady Montfort to herself, 'but his mind and manner are young and that is

everything. I am sure I meet youth every day who, compared with Lord Roehampton, could have no chance with my sex—men who can neither feel, nor think, nor converse. And then he is famous, and powerful, and fashionable, and knows how to talk to women. And this must all tell with a banker's daughter, dying, of course, to be a *grande dame*. It will do. He may not be young, but he is irresistible. And the father will like it, for he told me in confidence, at dinner, that he wished Lord Roehampton to be Prime Minister; and with this alliance he will be.'

The plot being devised by a fertile brain never wanting in expedients, its development was skilfully managed, and its accomplishment anticipated with confidence. It was remarkable with what dexterity the Neuchatel family and Lord Roehampton were brought together. Berengaria's lord and master was in the country, which he said he would not quit; but this did not prevent her giving delightful little dinners and holding select assemblies on nights when there was no dreadful House of Commons, and Lord Roehampton could be present. On most occasions, and especially on these latter ones, Lady Montfort could not endure existence without her dear Adriana. Mr. Neuchatel, who was a little in the plot, who at least smiled when Berengaria alluded to her enterprise, was not wanting in his contributions to its success. He hardly ever gave one of his famous banquets to which Lord Roehampton was not invited, and, strange to say, Lord Roehampton, who had the reputation of being somewhat difficult on this head, always accepted the invitations. The crowning social incident, however, was when Lord Roehampton opened his

own house for the first time since his widowerhood, and received the Neuchatels at a banquet not inferior to their own. This was a great triumph for Lady Montfort, who thought the end was at hand.

'Life is short,' she said to Lord Roehampton that evening. 'Why not settle it to-night?'

'Well,' said Lord Roehampton, 'you know I never like anything precipitate. Besides, why should the citadel surrender when I have hardly entered on my first parallel?'

'Ah! those are old-fashioned tactics,' said Lady Montfort.

'Well, I suppose I am an old-fashioned man.'

'Be serious, now. I want it settled before Easter. I must go down to my lord then, and even before; and I should like to see this settled before we separate.'

'Why does not Montfort come up to town?' said Lord Roehampton. 'He is wanted.'

'Well,' said Lady Montfort, with half a sigh, 'it is no use talking about it. He will not come. Our society bores him, and he must be amused. I write to him every day, and sometimes twice a-day, and pass my life in collecting things to interest him. I would never leave him for a moment, only I know then that he would get wearied of me; and he thinks now—at least, he once said so—that he has never had a dull moment in my company.'

'How can he find amusement in the country?' said Lord Roehampton. 'There is no sport now, and a man cannot always be reading French novels.'

'Well, I send amusing people down to him,' said Berengaria. 'It is difficult to arrange, for he does not like toadies, which is so unreasonable, for I know

many toadies who are very pleasant. Treeby is with him now, and that is excellent, for Treeby contradicts him, and is scientific as well as fashionable, and gives him the last news of the sun as well as of White's. I want to get this great African traveller to go down to him; but one can hardly send a perfect stranger as a guest. I wanted Treeby to take him, but Treeby refused — men are so selfish. Treeby could have left him there, and the traveller might have remained a week, told all he had seen, and as much more as he liked. My lord cannot stand Treeby more than two days, and Treeby cannot stand my lord for a longer period, and that is why they are such friends.'

'A sound basis of agreement,' said Lord Roehampton. 'I believe absence is often a great element of charm.'

'But, *à nos moutons,*' resumed Lady Montfort. 'You see now why I am so anxious for a conclusion of our affair. I think it is ripe.'

'Why do you?' said Lord Roehampton.

'Well, she must be very much in love with you.'

'Has she told you so?'

'No; but she looks in love.'

'She never has told me so,' said Lord Roehampton.

'Have you told her?'

'Well, I have not,' said her companion. 'I like the family — all of them. I like Neuchatel particularly. I like his house and style of living. You always meet nice people there, and hear the last thing that has been said or done all over the world. It is a house where you are sure not to be dull.'

'You have described a perfect home,' said Lady Montfort, 'and it awaits you.'

'Well, I do not know,' said Lord Roehampton. 'Perhaps I am fastidious, perhaps I am content; to be noticed sometimes by a Lady Montfort should, I think, satisfy any man.'

'Well, that is gallant, but it is not business, my dear lord. You can count on my devotion even when you are married; but I want to see you on a pinnacle, so that if anything happens there shall be no question who is to be the first man in this country.'

CHAPTER XL.

'His Royal Highness, Prince Florestan.'

THE meeting of Parliament caused also the return of Waldershare to England, and brought life and enjoyment to our friends in Warwick Street. Waldershare had not taken his seat in the autumn session. After the general election, he had gone abroad with Lord Beaumaris, the young nobleman who had taken them to the Derby, and they had seen and done many strange things. During all their peregrinations, however, Waldershare maintained a constant correspondence with Imogene, occasionally sending her a choice volume, which she was not only to read, but to prove her perusal of it by forwarding to him a criticism of its contents.

Endymion, too, was much pleased to meet Waldershare again, and told him of the kind of intimacy he had formed with Colonel Albert and all about the baron. Waldershare was much interested in these details, and it was arranged that an opportunity should be taken to make the colonel and Waldershare acquainted.

This, however, was not an easy result to bring about, for Waldershare insisted on its not occurring formally, and as the colonel maintained the utmost reserve with the household, and Endymion had no room of reception, weeks passed over without Waldershare knowing more of Colonel Albert personally than sometimes occasionally seeing him mount his horse.

In the meantime life in Warwick Street, so far as the Rodney family were concerned, appeared to have reassumed its pleasant, and what perhaps we are authorised in styling its normal condition. They went to the play two or three times a week, and there Waldershare or Lord Beaumaris, frequently both, always joined them; and then they came home to supper, and then they smoked; and sometimes there was a little singing, and sometimes a little whist. Occasionally there was only conversation, that is to say, Waldershare held forth, dilating on some wondrous theme, full of historical anecdote, and dazzling paradox, and happy phrase. All listened with interest, even those who did not understand him. Much of his talk was addressed really to Beaumaris, whose mind he was forming, as well as that of Imogene. Beaumaris was an hereditary Whig, but had not personally committed himself, and the ambition of Waldershare was to transform him not only into a Tory, but one of the old rock, a real Jacobite. 'Is not the Tory party,' Waldershare would exclaim, 'a succession of heroic spirits, "beautiful and swift," ever in the van, and foremost of their age?—Hobbes and Bolingbroke, Hume and Adam Smith, Wyndham and Cobham, Pitt and Grenville, Canning and Huskisson?—Are not the principles of Toryism those popular

rights which men like Shippen and Hynde Cotton flung in the face of an alien monarch and his mushroom aristocracy?—Place bills, triennial bills, opposition to standing armies, to peerage bills?—Are not the traditions of the Tory party the noblest pedigree in the world? Are not its illustrations that glorious martyrology, that opens with the name of Falkland and closes with the name of Canning?'

'I believe it is all true,' whispered Lord Beaumaris to Sylvia, who had really never heard of any of these gentlemen before, but looked most sweet and sympathetic.

'He is a wonderful man—Mr. Waldershare,' said Mr. Vigo to Rodney, 'but I fear not practical.'

One day, not very long after his return from his travels, Waldershare went to breakfast with his uncle, Mr. Sidney Wilton, now a cabinet minister, still unmarried, and living in Grosvenor Square. Notwithstanding the difference of their politics, an affectionate intimacy subsisted between them; indeed, Waldershare was a favourite of his uncle, who enjoyed the freshness of his mind, and quite appreciated his brilliancy of thought and speech, his quaint reading and effervescent imagination.

'And so you think we are in for life, George,' said Mr. Wilton, taking a piece of toast. 'I do not.'

'Well, I go upon this,' said Waldershare. 'It is quite clear that Peel has nothing to offer the country, and the country will not rally round a negation. When he failed in '34 they said there had not been sufficient time for the reaction to work. Well, now, since then, it has had nearly three years, during which you fellows have done everything to outrage every

prejudice of the constituency, and yet they have given you a majority.'

'Yes, that is all very well,' replied Mr. Wilton, 'but we are the Liberal shop, and we have no Liberal goods on hand; we are the party of movement, and must perforce stand still. The fact is, all the great questions are settled. No one will burn his fingers with the Irish Church again, in this generation certainly not, probably in no other; you could not get ten men together in any part of the country to consider the corn laws; I must confess I regret it. I still retain my opinion that a moderate fixed duty would be a wise arrangement, but I quite despair in my time of any such advance of opinion; as for the ballot, it is hardly tolerated in debating societies. The present government, my dear George, will expire from inanition. I always told the cabinet they were going on too fast. They should have kept back municipal reform. It would have carried us on for five years. It was our only *pièce de résistance.*'

'I look upon the House of Commons as a mere vestry,' said Waldershare. 'I believe it to be completely used up. Reform has dished it. There are no men, and naturally, because the constituencies elect themselves, and the constituencies are the most mediocre of the nation. The House of Commons now is like a spendthrift living on his capital. The business is done and the speeches are made by men formed in the old school. The influence of the House of Commons is mainly kept up by old social traditions. I believe if the eldest sons of peers now members would all accept the Chiltern Hundreds, and the House thus cease to be fashionable, before a year

was past, it would be as odious and as contemptible as the Rump Parliament.'

'Well, you are now the eldest son of a peer,' said Sidney Wilton, smiling. 'Why do you not set an example, instead of spending your father's substance and your own in fighting a corrupt borough?'

'I am *vox clamantis,*' said Waldershare. 'I do not despair of its being done. But what I want is some big guns to do it. Let the eldest son of a Tory duke and the eldest son of a Whig duke do the thing on the same day, and give the reason why. If Saxmundham, for example, and Harlaxton would do it, the game would be up.'

'On the contrary,' said Mr. Wilton, 'Saxmundham, I can tell you, will be the new cabinet minister.'

'Degenerate land!' exclaimed Waldershare. 'Ah! in the eighteenth century there was always a cause to sustain the political genius of the country,—the cause of the rightful dynasty.'

'Well, thank God, we have got rid of all those troubles,' said Mr. Wilton.

'Rid of them! I do not know that. I saw a great deal of the Duke of Modena this year, and tried as well as I could to open his mind to the situation.'

'You traitor!' exclaimed Mr. Wilton. 'If I were Secretary of State, I would order the butler to arrest you immediately, and send you to the Tower in a hack cab; but as I am only a President of a Board and your uncle, you will escape.'

'Well, I should think all sensible men,' said Waldershare, 'of all parties will agree, that before we try a republic, it would be better to give a chance to the rightful heir.'

'Well, I am not a republican,' said Mr. Wilton, 'and I think Queen Victoria, particularly if she make a wise and happy marriage, need not much fear the Duke of Modena.'

'He is our sovereign lord, all the same,' said Waldershare. 'I wish he were more aware of it himself. Instead of looking to a restoration to his throne, I found him always harping on the fear of French invasion. I could not make him understand that France was his natural ally, and that without her help, Charlie was not likely to have his own again.'

'Well, as you admire pretenders, George, I wish you were in my shoes this morning, for I have got one of the most disagreeable interviews on hand which ever fell to my lot.'

'How so, my dear uncle?' said Waldershare, in a tone of sympathy, for he saw that the countenance of Mr. Wilton was disturbed.

'My unhappy ward,' said Mr. Wilton; 'you know, of course, something about him.'

'Well, I was at school and college,' said Waldershare, 'when it all happened. But I have just heard that you had relations with him.'

'The most intimate; and there is the bitterness. There existed between his mother Queen Agrippina and myself ties of entire friendship. In her last years and in her greatest adversity she appealed to me to be the guardian of her son. He inherited all her beauty and apparently all her sweetness of disposition. I took the greatest pains with him. He was at Eton, and did well there. He was very popular; I never was so deceived in a boy in my life. I thought him the most docile of human beings, and that I had gained over him an entire influence. I am sure it

would have been exercised for his benefit. In short, I may say it now, I looked upon him as a son, and he certainly would have been my heir; and yet all this time, from his seventeenth year, he was immersed in political intrigue, and carrying on plots against the sovereign of his country, even under my own roof.'

'How very interesting!' said Waldershare.

'It may be interesting to you; I know what it cost me. The greatest anxiety and sorrow, and even nearly compromised my honour. Had I not a large-hearted chief and a true man of the world to deal with, I must have retired from the government.'

'How could he manage it?' said Waldershare.

'You have no conception of the devices and resources of the secret societies of Europe,' said Mr. Wilton. 'His drawing-master, his fencing-master, his dancing-master, all his professors of languages, who delighted me by their testimony to his accomplishments and their praises of his quickness and assiduity, were active confederates in bringing about events which might have occasioned an European war. He left me avowedly to pay a visit in the country, and I even received letters from him with the postmark of the neighbouring town; letters all prepared beforehand. My first authentic information as to his movements was to learn, that he had headed an invading force, landed on the shores which he claimed as his own, was defeated and a prisoner.'

'I remember it,' said Waldershare. 'I had just then gone up to St. John's, and I remember reading it with the greatest excitement.'

'All this was bad enough,' said Mr. Wilton, 'but this is not my sorrow. I saved him from death, or at least a dreadful imprisonment. He was permitted

to sail to America on his parole that he would never return to Europe, and I was required, and on his solemn appeal I consented, to give my personal engagement that the compact should be sacred. Before two years had elapsed, supported all this time, too, by my bounty, there was an attempt, almost successful, to assassinate the king, and my ward was discovered and seized in the capital. This time he was immured, and for life, in the strongest fortress of the country; but secret societies laugh at governments, and though he endured a considerable imprisonment, the world has recently been astounded by hearing that he has escaped. Yes; he is in London and has been here, though in studied obscurity, for some little time. He has never appealed to me until within these few days, and now only on the ground that there are some family affairs which cannot be arranged without my approval. I had great doubts whether I should receive him. I feel I ought not to have done so. But I hesitated, and I know not what may be the truth about women, but of this I am quite sure, the man who hesitates is lost.'

'How I should like to be present at the interview, my dear uncle!' said Waldershare.

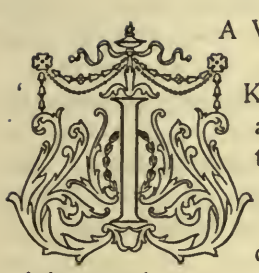
'And I should not be sorry to have a witness,' said Mr. Wilton, 'but it is impossible. I am ashamed to say how unhinged I feel; no person, and no memories, ought to exercise such an influence over one. To tell you the truth, I encouraged your pleasant gossip at breakfast by way of distraction at this moment, and now'——

At this moment, the groom of the chambers entered and announced 'His Royal Highness, Prince Florestan.'

Mr. Wilton, who was too agitated to speak, waved his hand to Waldershare to retire, and his nephew vanished. As Waldershare was descending the staircase, he drew back on a landing-place to permit the prince to advance undisturbed. The prince apparently did not observe him, but when Waldershare caught the countenance of the visitor, he started.

CHAPTER XLI.

A Wondrous Tale.



'I KNOW, sir, you are prejudiced against me,' said Prince Florestan, bowing before Mr. Wilton with a sort of haughty humility, 'and therefore I the more appreciate your condescension in receiving me.'

'I have no wish to refer to the past,' said Mr. Wilton somewhat sternly. 'You mentioned in your letter that my co-operation was necessary with reference to your private affairs, of which I once was a trustee, and under those circumstances I felt it my duty to accede to your request. I wish our communication to be limited to that business.'

'It shall be so strictly,' said the prince; 'you may remember, sir, that at the unhappy period when we were deprived of our throne, the name of Queen Agrippina was inscribed on the great book of the state for a considerable sum, for which the credit of the state was pledged to her. It was strictly her private property, and had mainly accrued through the sale of the estates of her ancestors. This sum was confiscated, and several other amounts, which belonged to members of our house and to our friends.

It was an act of pure rapine, so gross that as time revolved, and the sense of justice gradually returned to the hearts of men, restitution was made in every instance except my own, though I have reason to believe that individual case was the strongest. My bankers, the house of Neuchatel, who have much interested themselves in this matter, and have considerable influence with the government that succeeded us, have brought things to this pass, that we have reason to believe our claim would be conceded, if some of the foreign governments, and especially the government of this country, would signify that the settlement would not be disagreeable to them.' And the prince ceased, and raising his eyes, which were downcast as he spoke, looked Mr. Wilton straight in the face.

'Before such a proposal could even be considered by Her Majesty's Government,' said Mr. Wilton with a reddening cheek, 'the intimation must be made to them by authority. If the minister of your country has such an intimation to make to ours, he should address himself to the proper quarter, to Lord Roehampton.'

'I understand,' said Prince Florestan; 'but governments, like individuals, sometimes shrink from formality. The government of my country will act on the intimation, but they do not care to make it an affair of despatches.'

'There is only one way of transacting business,' said Mr. Wilton frigidly, and as if, so far as he was concerned, the interview was ended.

'I have been advised on high authority,' said Prince Florestan, speaking very slowly, 'that if any member of the present cabinet will mention in con-

versation to the representative of my country here, that the act of justice would not be disagreeable to the British Government, the affair is finished.'

'I doubt whether any one of my colleagues would be prepared to undertake a personal interference of that kind with a foreign government,' said Mr. Wilton stiffly. 'For my own part, I have had quite enough of such interpositions never to venture on them again.'

'The expression of feeling desired would involve no sort of engagement,' said the imperturbable prince.

'That depends on the conscience of the individual who interferes. No man of honour would be justified in so interposing if he believed he was thus furnishing arms against the very government of which he solicited the favour.'

'But why should he believe this?' asked the prince with great calmness.

'I think upon reflection,' said Mr. Wilton, taking up at the same time an opened letter which was before him, as if he wished to resume the private business on which he had been previously engaged, 'that your royal highness might find very adequate reasons for the belief.'

'I would put this before you with great deference, sir,' said the prince. 'Take my own case; is it not more likely that I should lead that life of refined retirement, which I really desire, were I in possession of the means to maintain such a position with becoming dignity, than if I were distressed, and harassed, and disgusted, every day, with sights and incidents which alike outrage my taste and self-respect? It is not prosperity, according to common belief, that makes conspirators.'

'You *were* in a position, and a refined position,' rejoined Mr. Wilton sharply; 'you had means adequate to all that a gentleman could desire, and might have been a person of great consideration, and you wantonly destroyed all this.'

'It might be remembered that I was young.'

'Yes, you were young, very young, and your folly was condoned. You might have begun life again, for to the world at least you were a man of honour. You had not deceived the world, whatever you might have done to others.'

'If I presume to make another remark,' said the prince calmly, but pale, 'it is only, believe me, sir, from the profound respect I feel for you. Do not misunderstand these feelings, sir. They are not unbecoming the past. Now that my mother has departed, there is no one to whom I am attached except yourself. I have no feeling whatever towards any other human being. All my thought and all my sentiment are engrossed by my country. But pardon me, dear sir, for so let me call you, if I venture to say that, in your decision on my conduct, you have never taken into consideration the position which I inherited.'

'I do not follow you, sir.'

'You never will remember, that I am the child of destiny,' said Prince Florestan. 'That destiny will again place me on the throne of my fathers. That is as certain as I am now speaking to you. But destiny for its fulfilment ordains action. Its decrees are inexorable, but they are obscure, and the being whose career it directs is as a man travelling in a dark night; he reaches his goal even without the aid of stars or moon.'

'I really do not understand what destiny means,' said Mr. Wilton. 'I understand what conduct means, and I recognise that it should be regulated by truth and honour. I think a man had better have nothing to do with destiny, particularly if it is to make him forfeit his parole.'

'Ah! sir, I well know that on that head you entertain a great prejudice in my respect. Believe me, it is not just. Even lawyers acknowledge that a contract which is impossible cannot be violated. My return from America was inevitable. The aspirations of a great people and of many communities required my presence in Europe. My return was the natural development of the irresistible principle of historical necessity.'

'Well, that principle is not recognised by Her Majesty's Ministers,' said Mr. Wilton, and both himself and the prince seemed to rise at the same time.

'I thank you, sir, for this interview,' said his royal highness. 'You will not help me, but what I require will happen by some other means. It is necessary, and therefore it will occur.'

The prince remounted his horse, and rode off quickly till he reached the Strand, where obstacles to rapid progress commenced, and though impatient, it was some time before he reached Bishopsgate Street. He entered the spacious courtyard of a noble mansion, and, giving his horse to the groom, inquired for Mr. Neuchatel, to whom he was at once ushered,—seated in a fine apartment at a table covered with many papers.

'Well, my prince,' said Mr. Neuchatel with a smiling eye, 'what brings such a great man into the city to-day? Have you seen your great friend?' And

then Prince Florestan gave Mr. Neuchatel a succinct but sufficient summary of his recent interview.

'Ah!' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'so it is, so it is; I dare say if you were received at St. James', Mr. Sidney Wilton would not be so very particular; but we must take things as we find them. If our fine friends will not help us, you must try us poor business men in the city. We can manage things here sometimes which puzzle them at the West End. I saw you were disturbed when you came in. Put on a good countenance. Nobody should ever look anxious except those who have no anxiety. I dare say you would like to know how your account is. I will send for it. It is not so bad as you think. I put a thousand pounds to it in the hope that your fine friend would help us, but I shall not take it off again. My Louis is going to-night to Paris, and he shall call upon the ministers and see what can be done. In the meantime, good appetite, sir. I am going to luncheon, and there is a place for you. And I will show you my Gainsborough that I have just bought, from a family for whom it was painted. The face is divine, very like our Miss Ferrars. I am going to send the picture down to Hainault. I won't tell you what I gave for it, because perhaps you would tell my wife and she would be very angry. She would want the money for an infant school. But I think she has schools enough. Now to lunch.'

On the afternoon of this day there was half-holiday at the office, and Endymion had engaged to accompany Waldershare on some expedition. They had been talking together in his room where Waldershare was finishing his careless toilette, which however was never finished, and they had just opened the house

door and were sallying forth when Colonel Albert rode up. He gave a kind nod to Endymion, but did not speak, and the companions went on. 'By-the-bye, Ferrars,' said Waldershare, pressing his arm and bubbling with excitement, 'I have found out who your colonel is. It is a wondrous tale, and I will tell it all to you as we go on.'

CHAPTER XLII.

Valuable Friendships.

ENDYMION had now passed three years of his life in London, and considering the hard circumstances under which he had commenced this career, he might on the whole look back to those years without dissatisfaction. Three years ago he was poor and friendless, utterly ignorant of the world, and with nothing to guide him but his own good sense. His slender salary had not yet been increased, but with the generosity and aid of his sister and the liberality of Mr. Vigo, he was easy in his circumstances. Through the Rodneys, he had become acquainted with a certain sort of miscellaneous life, a knowledge of which is highly valuable to a youth, but which is seldom attained without risk. Endymion, on the contrary, was always guarded from danger. Through his most unexpected connection with the Neuchatel family, he had seen something of life in circles of refinement and high consideration, and had even caught glimpses of that great world of which he read so much and heard people talk more, the world of the Lord Roehamptons and the Lady Montforts, and all those dazzling people

whose sayings and doings form the taste, and supply the conversation, and leaven the existence of admiring or wondering millions.

None of these incidents, however, had induced any change in the scheme of his existence. Endymion was still content with his cleanly and airy garret; still dined at Joe's; was still sedulous at his office, and always popular with his fellow clerks. Seymour Hicks, indeed, who studied the *Morning Post* with intenseness, had discovered the name of Endymion in the elaborate lists of attendants on Mrs. Neuchatel's receptions, and had duly notified the important event to his colleagues; but Endymion was not severely bantered on the occasion, for, since the withdrawal of St. Barbe from the bureau, the stock of envy at Somerset House was sensibly diminished.

His lodging at the Rodneys', however, had brought Endymion something more valuable than an innocuous familiarity with their various and suggestive life. In the friendship of Waldershare he found a rich compensation for being withdrawn from his school and deprived of his university. The care of his father had made Endymion a good classical scholar, and he had realised a degree of culture which it delighted the brilliant and eccentric Waldershare to enrich and to complete. Waldershare guided his opinions, and directed his studies, and formed his taste. Alone at night in his garret, there was no solitude, for he had always some book or some periodical, English or foreign, with which Waldershare had supplied him, and which he assured Endymion it was absolutely necessary that he should read and master.

Nor was his acquaintance with Baron Sergius less valuable, or less fruitful of results. He too became

interested in Endymion, and poured forth to him, apparently without reserve, all the treasures of his vast experience of men and things, especially with reference to the conduct of external affairs. He initiated him in the cardinal principles of the policies of different nations; he revealed to him the real character of the chief actors in the scene. 'The first requisite,' Baron Sergius would say, 'in the successful conduct of public affairs is a personal acquaintance with the statesmen engaged. It is possible that events may not depend now, so much as they did a century ago, on individual feeling, but, even if prompted by general principles, their application and management are always coloured by the idiosyncrasy of the chief actors. The great advantage which your Lord Roehampton, for example, has over all his colleagues in *la haute politique*, is that he was one of your plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Vienna. There he learned to gauge the men who govern the world. Do you think a man like that, called upon to deal with a Metternich or a Pozzo, has no advantage over an individual who never leaves his chair in Downing Street except to kill grouse? Pah! Metternich and Pozzo know very well that Lord Roehampton knows them, and they set about affairs with him in a totally different spirit from that with which they circumvent some statesman who has issued from the barricades of Paris.'

Nor must it be forgotten that his debating society and the acquaintance which he had formed there, were highly beneficial to Endymion. Under the roof of Mr. Bertie Tremaine he enjoyed the opportunity of forming an acquaintance with a large body of young men of breeding, of high education, and full of am-

bition, that was a substitute for the society, becoming his youth and station, which he had lost by not going to the university.

With all these individuals, and with all their circles, Endymion was a favourite. No doubt his good looks, his mien — which was both cheerful and pensive — his graceful and quiet manners, all told in his favour, and gave him a good start, but further acquaintance always sustained the first impression. He was intelligent and well-informed, without any alarming originality, or too positive convictions. He listened not only with patience but with interest to all, and ever avoided controversy. Here are some of the elements of a man's popularity.

What was his intellectual reach, and what his real character, it was difficult at this time to decide. He was still very young, only on the verge of his twentieth year; and his character had no doubt been influenced, it might be suppressed, by the crushing misfortunes of his family. The influence of his sister was supreme over him. She had never reconciled herself to their fall. She had existed only on the solitary idea of regaining their position, and she had never omitted an occasion to impress upon him that he had a great mission, and that, aided by her devotion, he would fulfil it. What his own conviction on this subject was may be obscure. Perhaps he was organically of that cheerful and easy nature, which is content to enjoy the present, and not brood over the past. The future may throw light upon all these points; at present it may be admitted that the three years of seemingly bitter and mortifying adversity have not been altogether wanting in beneficial elements in the formation of his character and the fashioning of his future life.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Adriana Objects.

ADY MONTFORT heard with great satisfaction from Mr. Neuchatel that Lord Roehampton was going to pay a visit to Hainault at Easter, and that he had asked himself. She playfully congratulated Mrs. Neuchatel on the subject, and spoke as if the affair was almost concluded. That lady, however, received the intimation with a serious, not to say distressed countenance. She said she should be grieved to lose Adriana under any circumstances; but if her marriage in time was a necessity, she trusted she might be united to some one who would not object to becoming a permanent inmate of their house. What she herself desired for her daughter was an union with some clergyman, and if possible, the rector of their own parish. But it was too charming a dream to realise. The rectory at Hainault was almost in the Park, and was the prettiest house in the world, with the most lovely garden. She herself much preferred it to the great mansion — and so on.

Lady Montfort stared at her with impatient astonishment, and then said, 'Your daughter, Mrs. Neucha-

tel, ought to make an alliance which would place her at the head of society.'

'What a fearful destiny,' said Mrs. Neuchatel, 'for any one, but overwhelming for one who must feel the whole time that she occupies a position not acquired by her personal qualities!'

'Adriana is pretty,' said Lady Montfort. 'I think her more than pretty; she is highly accomplished and in every way pleasing. What can you mean, then, my dear madam, by supposing she would occupy a position not acquired by her personal qualities?'

Mrs. Neuchatel sighed and shook her head, and then said, 'We need not have any controversy on this subject. I have no reason to believe there is any foundation for my fears. We all like and admire Lord Roehampton. It is impossible not to admire and like him. So great a man, and yet so gentle and so kind, so unaffected—I would say, so unsophisticated; but he has never given the slightest intimation, either to me or her father, that he seriously admired Adriana, and I am sure if he had said anything to her she would have told us.'

'He is always here,' said Lady Montfort, 'and he is a man who used to go nowhere except for form. Besides, I know that he admires her, that he is in love with her, and I have not a doubt that he has invited himself to Hainault in order to declare his feelings to her.'

'How very dreadful!' exclaimed Mrs. Neuchatel. 'What are we to do?'

'To do!' said Lady Montfort; 'why, sympathise with his happiness, and complete it. You will have a son-in-law of whom you may well be proud, and Adriana a husband who, thoroughly knowing the

world, and women, and himself, will be devoted to her; will be a guide and friend, a guide that will never lecture, and a friend who will always charm, for there is no companion in the world like him, and I think I ought to know,' added Lady Montfort, 'for I always tell him I was the last of his conquests, and I shall ever be grateful to him for his having spared to me so much of his society.'

'Adriana on this matter will decide for herself,' said Mrs. Neuchatel in a serious tone, and with a certain degree of dignity. 'Neither Mr. Neuchatel, nor myself, have ever attempted to control her feelings in this respect.'

'Well, I am now about to see Adriana,' said Lady Montfort; 'I know she is at home. If I had not been obliged to go to Princedown, I would have asked you to let me pass Easter at Hainault myself.'

On this very afternoon, when Myra, who had been walking in Regent's Park with her brother, returned home, she found Adriana agitated, and really in tears.

'What is all this, dearest?' inquired her friend.

'I am too unhappy,' sobbed Adriana, and then she told Myra that she had had a visit from Lady Montfort, and all that had occurred in it. Lady Montfort had absolutely congratulated her on her approaching alliance with Lord Roehampton, and when she altogether disclaimed it, and expressed her complete astonishment at the supposition, Lady Montfort had told her she was not justified in giving Lord Roehampton so much encouragement and trifling with a man of his high character and position.

'Fancy my giving encouragement to Lord Roehampton!' exclaimed Adriana, and she threw her

arms round the neck of the friend who was to console her.

'I agree with Lady Montfort,' said Myra, releasing herself with gentleness from her distressed friend. 'It may have been unconsciously on your part, but I think you have encouraged Lord Roehampton. He is constantly conversing with you, and he is always here, where he never was before, and, as Lady Montfort says, why should he have asked himself to pass the Easter at Hainault if it were not for your society?'

'He invited himself to Hainault, because he is so fond of papa,' said Adriana.

'So much the better, if he is to be your husband. That will be an additional element of domestic happiness.'

'O Myra! that you should say such things!' exclaimed Adriana.

'What things?'

'That I should marry Lord Roehampton.'

'I never said anything of the kind. Whom you should marry is a question you must decide for yourself. All that I said was, that if you marry Lord Roehampton, it is fortunate he is so much liked by Mr. Neuchatel.'

'I shall not marry Lord Roehampton,' said Adriana with some determination, 'and if he has condescended to think of marrying me,' she continued, 'as Lady Montfort says, I think his motives are so obvious that if I felt for him any preference it would be immediately extinguished.'

'Ah! now you are going to ride your hobby, my dear Adriana. On that subject we never can agree; were I an heiress, I should have as little objection to be married for my fortune as my face. Husbands, as

I have heard, do not care for the latter too long. Have more confidence in yourself, Adriana. If Lord Roehampton wishes to marry you, it is that he is pleased with you personally, that he appreciates your intelligence, your culture, your accomplishments, your sweet disposition, and your gentle nature. If in addition to these gifts you have wealth, and even great wealth, Lord Roehampton will not despise it, will not—for I wish to put it frankly—be uninfluenced by the circumstances, for Lord Roehampton is a wise man; but he would not marry you if he did not believe that you would make for him a delightful companion in life, that you would adorn his circle and illustrate his name.'

'Ah! I see you are all in the plot against me,' said Adriana. 'I have no friend.'

'My dear Adriana, I think you are unreasonable; I could say even unkind.'

'Oh! pardon me, dear Myra,' said Adriana, 'but I really am so very unhappy.'

'About what? You are your own mistress in this matter. If you do not like to marry Lord Roehampton, nobody will attempt to control you. What does it signify what Lady Montfort says? or anybody else, except your own parents, who desire nothing but your happiness? I should never have mentioned Lord Roehampton to you had you not introduced the subject yourself. And all that I meant to say was, what I repeat, that your creed that no one can wish to marry you except for your wealth is a morbid conviction, and must lead to unhappiness; that I do not believe that Lord Roehampton is influenced in his overture, if he make one, by any unworthy motive, and that any woman whose heart is disengaged should

not lightly repudiate such an advance from such a man, by which, at all events, she should feel honoured.'

'But my heart is engaged,' said Adriana in an almost solemn tone.

'Oh! that is quite a different thing!' said Myra, turning pale.

'Yes!' said Adriana; 'I am devoted to one whose name I cannot now mention, perhaps will never mention, but I am devoted to him. Yes!' she added with fire, 'I am not altogether so weak a thing as the Lady Montforts and some other persons seem to think me — I can feel and decide for myself, and it shall never be said of me that I purchased love.'

CHAPTER XLIV.

Myra is Surprised.

THERE was to be no great party at Hainault; Lord Roehampton particularly wished that there should be no fine folks asked, and especially no ambassadors. All that he wanted was to enjoy the fresh air, and to ramble in the forest, of which he had heard so much, with the young ladies.

'And, by-the-bye, Miss Ferrars,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'we must let what we were talking about the other day drop. Adriana has been with me quite excited about something Lady Montfort said to her. I soothed her and assured her she should do exactly as she liked, and that neither I nor her mother had any other wishes on such a subject than her own. The fact is, I answered Lady Montfort originally only half in earnest. If the thing might have happened, I should have been content — but it really never rested on my mind, because such matters must always originate with my daughter. Unless they come from her, with me they are mere fancies. But now I want you to help me in another matter, if not more grave, more businesslike. My lord must be amused, although it

is a family party. He likes his rubber: that we can manage. But there must be two or three persons that he is not accustomed to meet, and yet who will interest him. Now, do you know, Miss Ferrars, whom I think of asking?'

'Not I, my dear sir.'

'What do you think of the colonel?' said Mr. Neuchatel, looking in her face with a rather laughing eye.

'Well, he is very agreeable,' said Myra, 'and many would think interesting, and if Lord Roehampton does not know him, I think he would do very well.'

'Well, but Lord Roehampton knows all about him,' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'Well, that is an advantage,' said Myra.

'I do not know,' said Mr. Neuchatel. 'Life is a very curious thing, eh, Miss Ferrars? One cannot ask one person to meet another even in one's own home, without going through a sum of moral arithmetic.'

'Is it so?' said Myra.

'Well, Miss Ferrars,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'I want your advice and I want your aid; but then it is a long story, at which I am rather a bad hand,' and Mr. Neuchatel hesitated. 'You know,' he said, suddenly resuming, 'you once asked me who Colonel Albert was.'

'But I do not ask you now,' said Myra, 'because I know.'

'Hah, hah!' exclaimed Mr. Neuchatel, much surprised.

'And what you want to know is,' continued Myra, 'whether Lord Roehampton would have any objection to meet Prince Florestan?'

'That is something; but that is comparatively easy. I think I can manage that. But when they meet — that is the point. But, in the first place, I should like very much to know how you became acquainted with the secret.'

'In a very natural way; my brother was my informant,' she replied.

'Ah! now you see,' continued Mr. Neuchatel, with a serious air, 'a word from Lord Roehampton in the proper quarter might be of vast importance to the prince. He has a large inheritance, and he has been kept out of it unjustly. Our house has done what we could for him, for his mother, Queen Agrippina, was very kind to my father, and the house of Neuchatel never forgets its friends. But we want something else; we want the British Government to intimate that they will not disapprove of the restitution of the private fortune of the prince. I have felt my way with the premier; he is not favourable; he is prejudiced against the prince; and so is the cabinet generally; and yet all difficulties would vanish at a word from Lord Roehampton.'

'Well, this is a good opportunity for you to speak to him,' said Myra.

'Hem!' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'I am not so sure about that. I like Lord Roehampton, and, between ourselves, I wish he were first minister. He understands the Continent, and would keep things quiet. But, do you know, Miss Ferrars, with all his playful, good-tempered manner, as if he could not say a cross word or do an unkind act, he is a very severe man in business. Speak to him on business, and he is completely changed. His brows knit, he penetrates you with the terrible scrutiny of that deep-set eye;

he is more than stately, he is austere. I have been up to him with deputations—the Governor of the Bank, and all the first men in the city, half of them M.P.s, and they trembled before him like aspens. No, it will not do for me to speak to him, it will spoil his visit. I think the way will be this; if he has no objection to meet the prince, we must watch whether the prince makes a favourable impression on him, and if that is the case, and Lord Roehampton likes him, what we must do next is this—*you* must speak to Lord Roehampton.'

'I!'

'Yes, Miss Ferrars, you. Lord Roehampton likes ladies. He is never austere to them, even if he refuses their requests, and sometimes he grants them. I thought first of Mrs. Neuchatel speaking to him, but my wife will never interfere in anything in which money is concerned; then I thought Adriana might express a hope when they were walking in the garden, but now that is all over; and so you alone remain. I have great confidence in you,' added Mr. Neuchatel, 'I think you would do it very well. Besides, my lord rather likes you, for I have observed him often go and sit by you at parties, at our house.'

'Yes, he is very high-bred in that,' said Myra, gravely and rather sadly; 'and the fact of my being a dependent, I have no doubt, influences him.'

'We are all dependents in this house,' said Mr. Neuchatel with his sweetest smile; 'and I depend upon Miss Ferrars.'

Affairs on the whole went on in a promising manner. The weather was delightful, and Lord Roehampton came down to Hainault just in time for dinner, the day after their arrival, and in the highest

spirits. He seemed to be enjoying a real holiday; body and mind were in a like state of expansion; he was enchanted with the domain; he was delighted with the mansion, everything pleased and gratified him, and he pleased and gratified everybody. The party consisted only of themselves, except one of the nephews, with whom indeed Lord Roehampton was already acquainted; a lively youth, a little on the turf, not too much, and this suited Lord Roehampton, who was a statesman of the old aristocratic school, still bred horses, and sometimes ran one, and in the midst of an European crisis could spare an hour to Newmarket. Perhaps it was his only affectation.

Mrs. Neuchatel, by whom he was seated, had the happy gift of conversation; but the party was of that delightful dimension that it permitted talk to be general. Myra sat next to Lord Roehampton, and he often addressed her. He was the soul of the feast, and yet it is difficult to describe his conversation; it was a medley of graceful whim, interspersed now and then with a very short anecdote of a very famous person, or some deeply interesting reminiscence of some critical event. Every now and then he appealed to Adriana, who sat opposite to him at the round table, and she trusted that her irrepressible smiles would not be interpreted into undue encouragement.

Lord Roehampton had no objection to meet Prince Florestan, provided there were no other strangers, and the incognito was observed. He rather welcomed the proposal, observing he liked to know public men personally; so, you can judge of their calibre, which you never can do from books and newspapers, or the oral reports of their creatures or their enemies. And so on the next day Colonel Albert was expected.

Lord Roehampton did not appear till luncheon; he had received so many boxes from Downing Street which required his attention. 'Business will follow one,' he said; 'yesterday I thought I had baffled it. I do not know what I shall do without my secretaries. I think I shall get you young ladies to assist me.'

'You cannot have better secretaries,' said Mr. Neuchatel; 'Miss Ferrars often helps me.'

Then what was to be done after luncheon? Would he ride, or would he drive? And where should they drive and ride to? But Lord Roehampton did not much care to drive, and was tired of riding. He would rather walk and ramble about Hainault. He wanted to see the place, and the forest and the fern, and perhaps hear one of those nightingales that they had talked of in Portland Place. But Mrs. Neuchatel did not care to walk, and Mr. Neuchatel, though it was a holiday in the city, had a great many letters to write, and so somehow or other it ended in Lord Roehampton and the two young ladies walking out together, and remaining so long and so late, that Mrs. Neuchatel absolutely contemplated postponing the dinner hour.

'We shall just be in time, dear Mrs. Neuchatel,' said Myra; 'Lord Roehampton has gone up to his room. We have heard a nightingale, and Lord Roehampton insisted upon our sitting on the trunk of a tree till it ceased—and it never ceased.'

Colonel Albert, who had arrived, was presented to Lord Roehampton before dinner. Lord Roehampton received him with stately courtesy. As Myra watched, not without interest, the proceeding, she could scarcely believe, as she marked the lofty grace and

somewhat haughty mien of Lord Roehampton, that it could be the same being of frolic and fancy, and even tender sentiment, with whom she had been passing the preceding hours.

Colonel Albert sat next to Myra at dinner, and Lord Roehampton, between Mrs. Neuchatel and her daughter. His manner was different to-day, not less pleased and pleasing, but certainly more restrained. He encouraged Mrs. Neuchatel to occupy the chief part in conversation, and whispered to Adriana, who became somewhat uneasy; but the whispers mainly consisted of his delight in their morning adventures. When he remarked that it was one of the most agreeable days of his life, she became a little alarmed. Then he addressed Colonel Albert across the table, and said that he had heard from Mr. Neuchatel that the colonel had been in America, and asked some questions about public men, which brought him out. Colonel Albert answered with gentleness and modesty, never at any length, but in language which indicated, on all the matters referred to, thought and discrimination.

'I suppose their society is like the best society is Manchester?' said Lord Roehampton.

'It varies in different cities,' said Colonel Albert. 'In some there is considerable culture, and then refinement of life always follows.'

'Yes, but whatever they may be, they will always be colonial. What is colonial necessarily lacks originality. A country that borrows its language, its laws, and its religion, cannot have its inventive powers much developed. They got civilised very soon, but their civilisation was second-hand.'

'Perhaps their inventive powers may develop themselves in other ways,' said the prince. 'A nation

has a fixed quantity of invention, and it will make itself felt.'

'At present,' said Lord Roehampton, 'the Americans, I think, employ their invention in imaginary boundary lines. They are giving us plenty of trouble now about Maine.'

After dinner they had some music; Lord Roehampton would not play whist. He insisted on comparing the voices of his companions with that of the nightingale of the morning. He talked a great deal to Adriana, and Colonel Albert, in the course of the evening much to Myra, and about her brother. Lord Roehampton more than once had wished to tell her, as he had already told Miss Neuchatel, how delightful had been their morning; but on every occasion he had found her engaged with the colonel.

'I rather like your prince,' he had observed to Mr. Neuchatel, as they came from the dining-room. 'He never speaks without thinking; very reserved, I apprehend. They say, an inveterate conspirator.'

'He has had enough of that,' said Mr. Neuchatel. 'I believe he wants to be quiet.'

'That class of man is never quiet,' said Lord Roehampton.

'But what can he do?' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'What can he not do? Half Europe is in a state of chronic conspiracy.'

'You must keep us right, my dear lord. So long as you are in Downing Street I shall sleep at nights.'

'Miss Ferrars,' said Lord Roehampton abruptly to Mr. Neuchatel, 'must have been the daughter of William Ferrars, one of my great friends in old days. I never knew it till to-day, and she did not tell me, but it flashed across me from something she said.'

'Yes, she is his daughter, and is in mourning for him at this moment. She has had sorrows,' said Mr. Neuchatel. 'I hope they have ceased. It was one of the happiest days of my life when she entered this family.'

'Ah!' said Lord Roehampton.

The next day, after they had examined the famous stud and stables, there was a riding party, and in the evening Colonel Albert offered to perform some American conjuring tricks, of which he had been speaking in the course of the day. This was a most wonderful performance, and surprised and highly amused everybody. Colonel Albert was the last person who they expected would achieve such marvels; he was so quiet, not to say grave. They could hardly credit that he was the same person as he poured floods of flowers over Myra from her own borrowed pocket-handkerchief, and without the slightest effort or embarrassment, robbed Lord Roehampton of his watch, and deposited it in Adriana's bosom. It was evident that he was a complete master of sleight-of-hand.

'Characteristic!' murmured Lord Roehampton to himself.

It was the day after this, that Myra being in the music room and alone, Lord Roehampton opened the door, looked in, and then said, 'Where is Miss Neuchatel?'

'I think she is on the terrace.'

'Let us try to find her, and have one of our pleasant strolls. I sadly want one, for I have been working very hard all this morning, and half the night.'

'I will be with you, Lord Roehampton, in a moment.'

'Do not let us have anybody else,' he said, as she left the room.

They were soon on the terrace, but Adriana was not there.

'We must find her,' said Lord Roehampton; 'you know her haunts. Ah! what a delight it is to be in this air and this scene after those dreadful boxes! I wish they would turn us out. I think they must soon.'

'Now for the first time,' said Myra, 'Lord Roehampton is not sincere.'

'Then you think me always sincere?' he replied.

'I have no reason to think you otherwise.'

'That is very true,' said Lord Roehampton, 'truer perhaps than you imagine.' Then rather abruptly he said, 'You know Colonel Albert very well?'

'Pretty well. I have seen him here frequently, and he is also a friend of my brother.'

'Ah! a friend of your brother.' Then, after a slight pause, he said, 'He is an interesting man.'

'I think so,' said Myra. 'You know all about him, of course.'

'Very good-looking.'

'Well, he looks unhappy, I think, and worn.'

'One is never worn when one is young,' said Lord Roehampton.

'He must have great anxieties and great sorrows,' said Myra. 'I cannot imagine a position more unfortunate than that of an exiled prince.'

'I can,' said Lord Roehampton. 'To have the feelings of youth and the frame of age.'

Myra was silent, one might say dumbfounded. She had just screwed herself up to the task which Mr. Neuchatel had imposed on her, and was about to

appeal to the good offices of Lord Roehampton in favour of the prince, when he had indulged in a remark which was not only somewhat strange, but from the manner in which it was introduced hardly harmonised with her purpose.

'Yes, I would give up everything,' said Lord Roehampton. 'I would even be an exile to be young; to hear that Miss Ferrars deems me interesting and good-looking, though worn.'

'What is going to happen?' thought Myra. 'Will the earth open to receive me?'

'You are silent,' said Lord Roehampton. 'You will not speak, you will not sigh, you will not give a glance of consolation or even pity. But I have spoken too much not to say more. Beautiful, fascinating being, let me at least tell you of my love.'

Myra could not speak, but put her left hand to her face. Gently taking her other hand, Lord Roehampton pressed it to his lips. 'From the first moment I met you, my heart was yours. It was love at first sight; indeed, I believe in no other. I was amused with the projects of my friend, and I availed myself of them, but not unfairly. No one can accuse me of trifling with the affections of your sweet companion, and I must do her the justice to say that she did everything to convince me that she shrank from my attentions. But her society was an excuse to enjoy yours. I was an habitual visitor in town that I might cherish my love, and—dare I say it?—I came down here to declare it. Do not despise it, dearest of women; it is not worthy of you, but it is not altogether undeserving. It is, as you kindly believed it,—it is sincere!'

CHAPTER XLV.

'A Marriage in High Life.'

ON THE following day, Mr. Neuchatel had good-naturedly invited Endymion down to Hainault, and when he arrived there, a servant informed him that Miss Ferrars wished to see him in her room.

It was a long interview and an agitated one, and when she had told her tale, and her brother had embraced her, she sat for a time in silence, holding his hand, and intimating, that, for a while, she wished that neither of them should speak. Suddenly, she resumed, and said, 'Now you know all, dear darling; it is so sudden, and so strange, that you must be almost as much astounded as gratified. What I have sighed for, and prayed for — what, in moments of inspiration, I have sometimes foreseen — has happened. Our degradation is over. I seem to breathe for the first time for many years. I see a career, ay, and a great one; and what is far more important, I see a career for you.'

'At this moment, dear Myra, think only of yourself.'

'You are myself,' she replied, rather quickly, 'never more so than at this moment;' and then she

said in a tone more subdued, and even tender: 'Lord Roehampton has every quality and every accident of life that I delight in; he has intellect, eloquence, courage, great station and power; and, what I ought perhaps more to consider, though I do not, a sweet disposition and a tender heart. There is every reason why we should be happy—yes, very happy. I am sure I shall sympathise with him; perhaps, I may aid him; at least he thinks so. He is the noblest of men. The world will talk of the disparity of our years; but Lord Roehampton says that he is really the younger of the two, and I think he is right. My pride, my intense pride, never permitted to me any levity of heart.'

'And when is it to happen?' inquired Endymion.

'Not immediately. I could not marry till a year had elapsed after our great sorrow; and it is more agreeable, even to him, that our union should be delayed till the session is over. He wants to leave England; go abroad; have a real holiday. He has always had a dream of travelling in Spain; well, we are to realise the dream. If we could get off at the end of July, we might go to Paris, and then to Madrid, and travel in Andalusia in the autumn, and then catch the packet at Gibraltar, and get home just in time for the November cabinets.'

'Dear Myra! how wonderful it all seems!' involuntarily exclaimed Endymion.

'Yes, but more wonderful things will happen. We have now got a lever to move the world. Understand, my dear Endymion, that nothing is to be announced at present. It will be known only to this family, and the Penruddocks. I am bound to tell them, even immediately; they are friends that never

can be forgotten. I have always kept up my correspondence with Mrs. Penruddock. Besides, I shall tell her in confidence, and she is perfectly to be depended on. I am going to ask my lord to let Mr. Penruddock marry us.'

'Oh! that will be capital,' said Endymion.

'There is another person, by-the-bye, who must know it, at least my lord says so,' said Myra, 'and that is Lady Montfort; you have heard of that lady and her plans. Well, she must be told—at least, sooner or later. She will be annoyed, and she will hate me. I cannot help it; every one is hated by somebody.'

During the three months that had to elapse before the happy day, several incidents occurred that ought to be noted. In the first place, Lady Montfort, though disappointed and very much astonished, bore the communication from Lord Roehampton more kindly than he had anticipated. Lord Roehampton made it by letter, and his letters to women were more happy even than his despatches to ministers, and they were unrivalled. He put the matter in the most skilful form. Myra had been born in a social position not inferior to his own, and was the daughter of one of his early political friends. He did not dilate too much on her charms and captivating qualities, but sufficiently for the dignity of her who was to become his wife. And then he confessed to Lady Montfort how completely his heart and happiness were set on Lady Roehampton being welcomed becomingly by his friends; he was well aware, that in these matters things did not always proceed as one could wish, but this was the moment, and this the occasion, to test a friend, and he believed he had the dearest, the

most faithful, the most fascinating, and the most powerful in Lady Montfort.

'Well, we must put the best face upon it,' exclaimed that lady; 'he was always romantic. But, as he says, or thinks, what is the use of friends if they do not help you in a scrape?'

So Lady Montfort made the acquaintance of Myra, and welcomed her new acquaintance cordially. She was too fine a judge of beauty and deportment not to appreciate them, even when a little prejudice lurked behind. She was amused also, and a little gratified, by being in the secret; presented Myra with a rare jewel, and declared that she should attend the wedding; though when the day arrived, she was at Princedown, and could not, unfortunately, leave her lord.

About the end of June, a rather remarkable paragraph appeared in the journal of society:

'We understand that His Royal Highness Prince Florestan, who has been for some little time in this country, has taken the mansion in Carlton Gardens, recently occupied by the Marquis of Katterfelto. The mansion is undergoing very considerable repairs, but it is calculated that it will be completed in time for the reception of His Royal Highness by the end of the autumn; His Royal Highness has taken the extensive moors of Dinniewhiskie for the coming season.'

In the earlier part of July, the approaching alliance of the Earl of Roehampton with Miss Ferrars, the only daughter of the late Right Honourable William Pitt Ferrars, of Hurstley Hall, in the county of Berks, was announced, and great was the sensation, and innumerable the presents instantly ordered.

But on no one did the announcement produce a greater effect than on Zenobia; that the daughter of her dearest friend should make so interesting and so distinguished an alliance was naturally most gratifying to her. She wrote to Myra a most impassioned letter, as if they had only separated yesterday, and a still longer and more fervent one to Lord Roehampton. Zenobia and he had been close friends in other days, till he wickedly changed his politics, and was always in office and Zenobia always out. This was never to be forgiven. But the bright lady forgot all this now, and sent to Myra the most wondrous bracelet of precious stones, in which the word 'Souvenir' was represented in brilliants, rubies, and emeralds.

'For my part,' said Myra to Endymion, 'my most difficult task are the bridesmaids. I am to have so many, and know so few. I feel like a recruiting sergeant. I began with Adriana, but my lord helps me very much out of his family, and says, when we have had a few family dinners, all will be right.'

Endymion did not receive the banter he expected at the office. The event was too great for a jest. Seymour Hicks, with a serious countenance, said Ferrars might get anywhere now,—all the ministerial receptions, of course. Jawett said there would be no ministerial receptions soon; they were degrading functions. Clear-headed Trenchard congratulated him quietly, and said, 'I do not think you will stay much longer among us, but we shall always remember you with interest.'

At last the great day arrived, and at St. George's, Hanover Square, the Right Honourable the Earl of Roehampton, K.G., was united to Miss Ferrars. Mr. Penruddock joined their hands. His son Nigel had

been invited to assist him, but did not appear, though Myra had written to him. The great world assembled in force, and Endymion observed Mr. and Mrs. Rodney and Imogene in the body of the church. After the ceremony there was an entertainment in Portland Place, and the world ate ortolans and examined the presents. These were remarkable for number and splendour. Myra could not conceal her astonishment at possessing so many friends; but it was the fashion for all Lord Roehampton's acquaintance to make him offerings, and to solicit his permission to present gifts to his bride. Mr. Neuchatel placed on her brow a diamond tiara, and Mrs. Neuchatel encircled her neck with one of her diamond necklaces. 'I should like to give the other one to Adriana,' she observed, 'but Adriana says that nothing will ever induce her to wear jewels.' Prince Florestan presented Lady Roehampton with a vase which had belonged to his mother, and which had been painted by Boucher for Marie Antoinette. It was matchless, and almost unique.

Not long after this, Lord Beaumaris, with many servants and many guns, took Waldershare and Endymion down with him to Scotland.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Prophecies.

THE end of the season is a pang to society. More hopes have been baffled than realised. There is something melancholy in the last ball, though the music ever seems louder and the lights more glaring than usual. Or it may be, the last entertainment is that hecatomb they call a wedding breakfast, which celebrates the triumph of a rival. That is pleasant. Society, to do it justice, struggles hard to revive in other scenes the excitement that has expired. It sails to Cowes, it scuds to bubbling waters in the pine forests of the continent, it stalks even into Scotland; but it is difficult to restore the romance that has been rudely disturbed, and to gather again together the threads of the intrigue that have been lost in the wild flight of society from that metropolis, which is now described as 'a perfect desert'—that is to say, a park or so, two or three squares, and a dozen streets where society lives; where it dines, and dances, and blackballs, and bets, and spouts.

But to the world in general, the mighty million, to the professional classes, to all men of all business

whatever, the end of the season is the beginning of carnival. It is the fulfilment of the dream over which they have been brooding for ten months, which has sustained them in toil, lightened anxiety, and softened even loss. It is air, it is health, it is movement, it is liberty, it is nature—earth, sea, lake, moor, forest, mountain, and river. From the heights of the Engadine to Margate Pier, there is equal rapture, for there is an equal cessation of routine.

Few enjoy a holiday more than a young clerk in a public office, who has been bred in a gentle home, and enjoyed in his boyhood all the pastimes of gentlemen. Now he is ever toiling, with an uncertain prospect of annual relaxation, and living hardly. Once on a time, at the paternal hall, he could shoot, or fish, or ride, every day of his life, as a matter of course; and now, what would he not give for a good day's sport? Such thoughts had frequently crossed the mind of Endymion when drudging in London during the autumn, and when all his few acquaintances were away. It was, therefore, with no ordinary zest that he looked forward to the unexpected enjoyment of an unstinted share of some of the best shooting in the United Kingdom. And the relaxation and the pastime came just at the right moment, when the reaction from all the excitement attendant on the marvellous change in his sister's position, would have made him, deprived of her consoling society, doubly sensible of his isolated position.

It so happened that the moors of Lord Beaumaris were contiguous to the celebrated shootings of Dinniewhiskie, which were rented by Prince Florestan, and the opportunity now offered which Waldershare desired of making the acquaintance of the prince in an

easy manner. Endymion managed this cleverly. Waldershare took a great fancy to the prince. He sympathised with him, and imparted to Endymion his belief that they could not do a better thing than devote their energies to a restoration of his rights. Lord Beaumaris, who hated foreigners, but who was always influenced by Waldershare, also liked the prince, and was glad to be reminded by his mentor that Florestan was half an Englishman, not to say a whole one, for he was an Eton boy. What was equally influential with Lord Beaumaris was, that the prince was a fine shot, and indeed a consummate sportsman, and had in his manners that calm which is rather unusual with foreigners, and which is always pleasing to an English aristocrat. So in time they became intimate, sported much together, and visited each other at their respective quarters. The prince was never alone. What the county paper described as distinguished foreigners were perpetually paying him visits, long or short, and it did not generally appear that these visits were influenced by a love of sport. One individual, who arrived shortly after the prince, remained, and, as was soon known, was to remain permanently. This was a young gentleman, short and swarthy, with flashing eyes and a black moustache, known by the name of the Duke of St. Angelo, but who was really only a cadet of that illustrious house. The Duke of St. Angelo took the management of the household of the prince — was evidently the controller; servants trembled at his nod, and he rode any horse he liked; he invited guests, and arranged the etiquette of the interior. He said one day very coolly to Waldershare: 'I observe that Lord Beaumaris and his friends never rise when the prince moves.'

'Why should we?'

'His rank is recognised and guaranteed by the Treaty of Vienna,' said the Duke of St. Angelo, with an arrogant air.

'His princely rank,' replied Waldershare, 'but not his royalty.'

'That is a mere refinement,' said the duke contemptuously.

'On the contrary, a clear distinction, and specifically made in the treaty. I do not think the prince himself would desire such a ceremony, and let me recommend you, duke,' added Waldershare, 'not to go out of your way to insist on these points. They will not increase the prince's popularity.'

'The time will come, and before long, when the Treaty of Vienna, with its clear distinctions, will be at the bottom of the Red Sea,' said the Duke of St. Angelo, 'and then no one will sit when his Majesty rises.'

'Amen!' said Waldershare. 'All diplomacy since the Treaty of Utrecht seems to me to be fiddle-faddle, and the country rewarded the great man who made that treaty by an attainder.'

Endymion returned to town towards the end of September, Waldershare went to Paris, and Lord Beaumaris and the prince, who had become intimate, repaired together to Conington, the seat of Lord Beaumaris, to kill pheasants. Even the Rodneys, who had gone to the Rhine this year, had not returned. Endymion had only the society of his fellow clerks. He liked Trenchard, who was acute, full of official information, and of gentle breeding. Still it must be confessed that Endymion felt the change in his society. Seymour Hicks was hardly a fit successor to Walder-

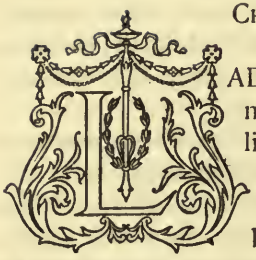
share, and Jawett's rabid abstractions on government were certainly not so interesting as *la haute politique* of the Duke of St. Angelo. Were it not for the letters which he constantly received from his sister he would have felt a little despondent. As it was, he renewed his studies in his pleasant garret, trained himself in his French and German, and got up several questions for the Union.

The month seemed very long, but it was not unprofitably spent. The Rodneys were still absent. They had not returned as they had intended direct to England, but had gone to Paris to meet Mr. Waldershare.

At the end of October there was a semi-official paragraph announcing the approaching meeting of the cabinet, and the movements of its members. Some were in the north, and some were in the south; some were killing the last grouse, and some placed in green ridings, were blazing in battues. But all were to be at their posts in ten days, and there was a special notification that intelligence had been received of the arrival of Lord and Lady Roehampton at Gibraltar.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Change of Scene.



ADY ROEHAMPTON, in her stately mansion in St. James' Square, found life very different from what she had experienced in her Andalusian dream. For three months she had been the constant companion of one of the most fascinating of men, whose only object had been to charm and delight her. And in this he had entirely succeeded. From the moment they arrived in London, however, they seemed to be separated, and although when they met, there was ever a sweet smile and a kind and playful word for her, his brow, if not oppressed with care, was always weighty with thought. Lord Roehampton was little at his office; he worked in a spacious chamber on the ground floor of his private residence, and which was called the library, though its literature consisted only of Hansard, volumes of state papers, shelves of treatises, and interminable folios of parliamentary reports. He had not been at home a week before the floor of the apartment was literally covered with red boxes, all containing documents requiring attention, and which messengers were perpetually bringing or carrying

away. Then there were long meetings of the cabinet almost daily, and daily visits from ambassadors and foreign ministers, which prevented the transaction of the current business, and rendered it necessary that Lord Roehampton should sit up late in his cabinet, and work sometimes nearly till the hours of dawn. There had been of course too some arrears of business, for Secretaries of State cannot indulge with impunity in Andalusian dreams, but Lord Roehampton was well served. His Under-Secretaries of State were capable and experienced men, and their chief had not been altogether idle in his wanderings. He had visited Paris, and the capital of France in those days was the capital of diplomacy. The visit of Lord Roehampton had settled some questions which might have lingered for years, and had given him that opportunity of personal survey which to a statesman is invaluable.

Although it was not the season, the great desert had, comparatively speaking, again become peopled. There were many persons in town, and they all called immediately on Lady Roehampton. The ministerial families and the diplomatic corps alone form a circle, but there is also a certain number of charming people who love London in November, and lead there a wondrous pleasant life of real amusement, until their feudal traditions and their domestic duties summon them back to their Christmas homes.

Lord and Lady Roehampton gave constant dinners, and after they had tried two or three, he expressed his wish to his wife that she should hold a small reception after these dinners. He was a man of great tact, and he wished to launch his wife quietly and safely on the social ocean. 'There is nothing like practising before Christmas, my love,' he would say;

'you will get your hand in, and be able to hold regular receptions in the spring.' And he was quite right. The dinners became the mode, and the assemblies were eagerly appreciated. The Secretary of the Treasury whispered to an Under-Secretary of State,—'This marriage was a *coup*. We have got another house.'

Myra had been a little anxious about the relations between Lord Roehampton and her brother. She felt, with a woman's instinct, that her husband might not be overpleased by her devotion to Endymion, and she could not resist the conviction that the disparity of age which is easily forgotten in a wife, and especially in a wife who adores you, assumes a different, and somewhat distasteful character, when a great statesman is obliged to recognise it in the shape of a boyish brother-in-law. But all went right, for the sweetness of Lord Roehampton's temper was inexhaustible. Endymion had paid several visits to St. James' Square before Myra could seize the opportunity, for which she was ever watching, to make her husband and her brother acquainted.

'And so you are one of us,' said Lord Roehampton, with his sweetest smile and in his most musical tone, 'and in office. We must try to give you a lift.' And then he asked Endymion who was his chief, and how he liked him, and then he said, 'A good deal depends on a man's chief. I was under your grandfather when I first entered Parliament, and I never knew a pleasanter man to do business with. He never made difficulties; he always encouraged one. A younker likes that.'

Lady Roehampton was desirous of paying some attention to all those who had been kind to her

brother; particularly Mr. Waldershare and Lord Beaumaris—and she wished to invite them to her house. 'I am sure Waldershare would like to come,' said Endymion, 'but Lord Beaumaris, I know, never goes anywhere, and I have myself heard him say he never would.'

'Yes, my lord was telling me Lord Beaumaris was quite *farouche*, and it is feared that we may lose him. That would be sad,' said Myra, 'for he is powerful.'

'I should like very much if you could give me a card for Mr. Trenchard,' said Endymion; 'he is not in society, but he is quite a gentleman.'

'You shall have it, my dear. I have always liked Mr. Trenchard, and I dare say, some day or other, he may be of use to you.'

The Neuchatels were not in town, but Myra saw them frequently, and Mr. Neuchatel often dined in St. James' Square—but the ladies always declined every invitation of the kind. They came up from Hainault to see Myra, but looked as if nothing but their great affection would prompt such a sacrifice, and seemed always pining for Arcadia. Endymion, however, not unfrequently continued his Sunday visits to Hainault, to which Mr. Neuchatel had given him a general welcome. This young gentleman, indeed, soon experienced a considerable change in his social position. Invitations flocked to him, and often from persons whom he did not know, and who did not even know him. He went by the name of Lady Roehampton's brother, and that was a sufficient passport.

'We are trying to get up a carpet dance to-night,' said Belinda to a fair friend. 'What men are in town?'

'Well, there is Mr. Waldershare, who has just left me.'

'I have asked him.'

'Then there is Lord Willesden and Henry Grantley —I know they are passing through town—and there is the new man, Lady Roehampton's brother.'

'I will send to Lord Willesden and Henry Grantley immediately, and perhaps you will send a card, which I will write here, for me to the new man.'

And in this way Mr. Ferrars soon found that he was what is called 'everywhere.'

One of the most interesting acquaintances that Lady Roehampton made was a colleague of her husband, and that was Mr. Sidney Wilton, once the intimate friend of her father. He had known herself and her brother when they were children, indeed from the cradle. Mr. Sidney Wilton was in the perfection of middle life, and looked young for his years. He was tall and pensive, and naturally sentimental, though a long political career, for he had entered the House of Commons for the family borough the instant he was of age, had brought to this susceptibility a salutary hardness. Although somewhat alienated from the friend of his youth by the course of affairs, for Mr. Sidney Wilton had followed Lord Roehampton, while Mr. Ferrars had adhered to the Duke of Wellington, he had not neglected Ferrars in his fall, but his offers of assistance, frankly and generously made, had been coldly though courteously rejected, and no encouragement had been given to the maintenance of their once intimate acquaintance.

Mr. Sidney Wilton was much struck by the appearance of Lady Roehampton. He tried to compare the fulfilment of her promise with the beautiful and haughty child whom he used to wonder her parents so extravagantly spoiled. Her stature was above the

average height of women and finely developed and proportioned. But it was in the countenance — in the pellucid and commanding brow, the deep splendour of her dark blue eyes softened by long lashes, her short upper lip, and the rich profusion of her dark chestnut hair — that his roused memory recalled the past; and he fell into a mood of agitated contemplation.

The opportunities which he enjoyed of cultivating her society were numerous, and Mr. Wilton missed none. He was frequently her guest, and being himself the master of a splendid establishment, he could offer her a hospitality which every one appreciated. Lord Roehampton was peculiarly his political chief, and they had always been socially intimate. As the trusted colleague of her husband — as one who had known her in her childhood, and as himself a man singularly qualified, by his agreeable conversation and tender and deferential manner, to make his way with women — Mr. Sidney Wilton had no great difficulty, particularly in that happy demi-season which precedes Christmas, in establishing relations of confidence and intimacy with Lady Roehampton.

The cabinets were over: the government had decided on their measures, and put them in a state of preparation, and they were about to disperse for a month. The seat of Lord Roehampton was in the extreme north of England, and a visit to it was inconvenient at this moment, and especially at this season. The department of Lord Roehampton was very active at this time, and he was unwilling that the first impression by his wife of her future home should be experienced at a season little favourable to the charms of a northern seat. Mr. Sidney Wilton was the proprietor of the most beautiful and the most celebrated

villa in England; only twenty miles from town, seated on a wooded crest of the swan-crowned Thames, with gardens of delight, and the woods full of pheasants, and a terrace that would have become a court, glancing over a wide expanse of bower and glade, studded with bright halls and delicate steeples, and the smoke of rural homes.

It was arranged that Lord and Lady Roehampton should pass their Christmas at Gaydene with Mr. Sidney Wilton, stay as long as they liked, go where they chose, but make it their headquarters. It was a most successful visit; for a great deal of business was done, as well as pleasure enjoyed. The ambassadors, who are always a little uneasy at Christmas when everybody is away, and themselves without country homes, were all invited down for that week. Lord Roehampton used to give them audiences after the shooting parties. He thought it was a specific against their being too long. He used to say, 'The first dinner-bell often brings things to a point.'

After Christmas there was a stream of company, chiefly official and parliamentary. The banquet and the battue did not always settle the business, the clause, or the schelude, which the guests often came down to Gaydene ostensibly to accomplish, but they sent men back to town with increased energy and good humour, and kept the party in heart. Towards the end of the month the premier came down, and for him the Blue Ribbon Covert had been reserved, though he really cared little for sport. It was an eighteenth century tradition that Knights of the Garter only had been permitted to shoot this choice preserve, but Mr. Sidney Wilton, in this advanced age, did not of course revive such an ultra-exclusive practice, and

he was particular in arranging the party to include Mr. Jorrocks. This was a Radical member to whom considerable office had been given at the reconstruction of 1835, when it was necessary that the Whigs should conciliate the Mountain. He was a pretentious, underbred, half-educated man, fluent with all the commonplaces of middle-class ambition, which are humorously called democratic opinions, but at heart a sycophant of the aristocracy. He represented, however, a large and important constituency, and his promotion was at first looked upon as a masterpiece of management.

The Mountain, who knew Jorrocks well, and felt that they had in their ranks men in every sense his superior, and that he could be no representative of their intelligence and opinions, and so by degrees prepare for their gradual admission to the sacred land, at first sulked over the promotion of their late companion, and only did not publicly deride it from the feeling that by so doing they might be playing the game of the ministry. At the time of which we are writing, having become extremely discontented and wishing to annoy the government, they even affected dissatisfaction at the subordinate position which Jorrocks occupied in the administration, and it was generally said — had become indeed the slang of the party — that the test of the sincerity of the ministry to Liberal principles was to put Jorrocks in the cabinet. The countenance of the premier when this choice programme was first communicated to him was what might have been expected had he learnt of the sudden descent upon this isle of an invading force, and the Secretary of the Treasury whispered in confidence to one or two leaders of the Mountain, that if they did not take care they would upset the government.

'That is exactly what we want to do,' was the reply.

So it will be seen that the position of the ministry, previous to the meeting of Parliament in 1839, was somewhat critical. In the meantime, its various members, who knew their man, lavished every practicable social attention on Jorrocks. The dinners they gave him were doubled; they got their women to call on his women; and Sidney Wilton, a member of an illustrious Garter family, capped the climax by appointing him one of the party to shoot the Blue Ribbon Covert.

Mr. Wilton had invited Endymion to Gaydene, and, as his stay there could only be brief, had even invited him to repeat the visit. He was, indeed, unaffectedly kind to one whom he remembered so young, and was evidently pleased with him.

One evening, a day or two before the break-up of the party, while some charming Misses Playfellow, with an impudent brother, who all lived in the neighbourhood, were acting charades, Mr. Wilton said to Lady Roehampton, by whose side he was sitting in the circle—

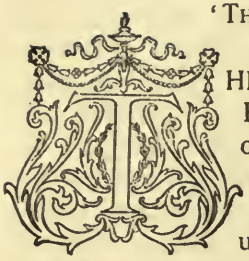
'I have had a very busy morning about my office. There is to be a complete revolution in it. The whole system is to be reconstructed; half the present people are to be pensioned off, and new blood is to be introduced. It struck me that this might be an opening for your brother. He is in the public service—that is something; and as there are to be so many new men, there will be no jealousy as to his promotion. If you will speak to him about it, and he likes it, I will appoint him one of the new clerks; and then, if he also likes it, he shall be my private secretary.

That will give him position, and be no mean addition to his income, you know, if we last — but that depends, I suppose, on Mr. Jorrocks.'

Lady Roehampton communicated all this to her brother on her return to London. 'It is exactly what I wished,' she said. 'I wanted you to be private secretary to a cabinet minister, and if I were to choose any one, except, of course, my lord, it would be Mr. Wilton. He is a perfect gentleman, and was dear papa's friend. I understand you will have three hundred a year to begin with, and the same amount as his secretary. You ought to be able to live with ease and propriety on six hundred a year — and this reminds me of what I had been thinking of before we went to Gaydene. I think now you ought to have a more becoming residence. The Rodneys are good people, I do not doubt, and I dare say we shall have an opportunity of proving our sense of their services; but they are not exactly the people that I care for you to live with, and, at any rate, you cannot reside any longer in a garret. I have taken some chambers in the Albany, therefore, for you, and they shall be my contribution to your housekeeping. They are not badly furnished, but they belonged to an old general officer, and are not very new-fashioned; but we will go together and see them to-morrow, and I dare say I shall soon be able to make them *comme il faut.*'

CHAPTER XLVIII.

'The Fair Imogene.'



His considerable rise in the life of Endymion, after the first excitement occasioned by its announcement to him had somewhat subsided, was not contemplated by him with unmixed feelings of satisfaction. It seemed to terminate many relations of life, the value of which he had always appreciated, but which now, with their impending conclusion, he felt, and felt keenly, had absolutely contributed to his happiness. There was no great pang in quitting his fellow clerks, except Trenchard, whom he greatly esteemed. But poor little Warwick Street had been to him a real home, if unvarying kindness, and sedulous attention, and the affection of the eyes and heart, as well as of the mouth, can make a hearth. He hoped he might preserve the friendship of Waldershare, which their joint intimacy with the prince would favour; but still he could hardly flatter himself that the delightful familiarity of their past lives could subsist. Endymion sighed, and then he sighed again. He felt sad. Because he was leaving the humble harbour of refuge, the entrance to which, even in the darkest hour of his fallen fortunes, was thought somewhat of an in-

dignity, and was about to assume a position which would not have altogether misbecome the earliest expectations of his life? That seems unreasonable; but mankind, fortunately, are not always governed by reason, but by sentiment, and often by very tender sentiment.

When Endymion, sitting in his little room, analysed his feelings, he came to the conclusion that his sadness was occasioned by his having to part from Imogene. It often requires an event in life, and an unexpected one, to make us clearly aware of the existence of feelings which have long influenced us. Never having been in a position in which the possibility of uniting his fate to another could cross his mind for a moment, he had been content with the good fortune which permitted a large portion of his life to be passed in the society of a woman who, unconsciously both to him and to herself, had fascinated him. The graceful child who, four or five years ago, had first lit him to his garret, without losing anything of her rare and simple ingenuousness, had developed into a beautiful and accomplished woman. There was a strong resemblance between Imogene and her sister, but Imogene was a brunette. Her countenance indicated far more intellect and character than that of Sylvia. Her brow was delicately pencilled and finely arched, and her large dark eyes gleamed with a softness and sweetness of expression which were irresistibly attractive, and seemed to indicate sympathy with everything that was good and beautiful. Her features were not so regular as her sister's; but when she smiled, her face was captivating.

Endymion had often listened, half with fondness and half with scepticism, to Waldershare dilating,

according to his wont, on the high character and qualities of Imogene, whom he persisted in believing he was preparing for a great career. 'How it will come about I cannot say,' he would remark; 'but it will come. If my legitimate sovereign were on the throne, and I in the possession of my estates, which were graciously presented by the usurper to the sausage-makers, or some other choice middle-class corporation, I would marry her myself. But that is impossible. That would only be asking her to share my ruin. I want her to live in palaces, and perhaps, in my decline of life, make me her librarian, like Casanova. I should be content to dine in her hall every day beneath the salt, and see her enter with her state, amid the flourish of trumpets.' And now, strange to say, Endymion was speculating on the fate of Imogene, and, as he thought, in a more practical spirit. Six hundred a year, he thought, was not a very large income; but it was an income, and one which a year ago he never contemplated possessing until getting grey in the public service. Why not realise perfect happiness at once? He could conceive no bliss greater than living with Imogene in one of those little villas, even if semi-detached, which now are numbered by tens of thousands, and which were then beginning to shoot out their suburban antennæ in every direction of our huge metropolis. He saw her in his mind's eye in a garden of perpetual sunshine, breathing of mignonette and bright with roses, and waiting for him as he came down from town and his daily labours, in the cheap and convenient omnibus. What a delightful companion to welcome him! How much to tell her, and how much to listen to! And then their evenings with a delicious

book or some delightful music! What holidays, too, of romantic adventure! The vine-clad Rhine, perhaps Switzerland; at any rate, the quaint old cities of Flanders, and the winding valley of the Meuse. They could live extremely well on six hundred a year; yes, with all the real refinements of existence. And all this genuine happiness was to be sacrificed for utterly fantastic and imaginary gratifications, which, if analysed, would be found only to be efforts to amuse and astonish others.

It did not yet occur to Endymion that his garden could not always be sunshiny; that cares crop up in villas, even semi-detached, as well as joys; that he would have children, and perhaps too many; that they would be sick, and that doctors' bills would soon put a stop to romantic excursions; that his wife would become exhausted with nursing and clothing and teaching them; that she herself would become an invalid, and moped to death; that his resources would every day bear a less proportion to his expenditure; and that, wanting money, he would return too often from town a harassed husband to a jaded wife!

Mr. Rodney and Sylvia were at Conington on a visit to Lord Beaumaris, hunting. It was astonishing how Sylvia had ridden to the hounds, mounted on the choicest steeds, and in a scarlet habit which had been presented to her by Mr. Vigo. She had created quite an enthusiasm in the field, and Lord Beaumaris was proud of his guests. When Endymion parted with his sister at the Albany, where they had been examining his rooms, he had repaired to Warwick Street, with some expectation that the Rodneys would have returned from Conington, and he intended to break to his host the impending change in his life.

The Rodneys, however, had not arrived, and so he ascended to his room, where he had been employed in arranging his books and papers, and indulging in the reverie which we have indicated. When he came downstairs, wishing to inquire about the probable arrival of his landlord, Endymion knocked at the door of the parlour where they used to assemble, and on entering, found Imogene writing.

'How do you do, Mr. Ferrars?' she said, rising. 'I am writing to Sylvia. They are not returning as soon as they intended, and I am to go down to Conington by an early train to-morrow.'

'I wanted to see Mr. Rodney,' said Endymion moodily.

'Can I write anything to him, or tell him anything?' said Imogene.

'No,' continued Endymion in a melancholy tone. 'I can tell you what I wanted to say. But you must be occupied now, going away, and unexpectedly, to-morrow. It seems to me that every one is going away.'

'Well, we have lost the prince, certainly,' said Imogene, 'and I doubt whether his rooms will be ever let again.'

'Indeed!' said Endymion.

'Well, I only know what Mr. Waldershare tells me. He says that Mr. Rodney and Mr. Vigo have made a great speculation, and gained a great deal of money; but Mr. Rodney never speaks to me of such matters, nor indeed does Sylvia. I am myself very sorry that the prince has gone, for he interested me much.'

'Well, I should think Mr. Rodney would not be very sorry to get rid of me then,' said Endymion.

'O Mr. Ferrars! why should you say or think such things? I am sure that my brother and sister, and indeed every one in this house, always consider your comfort and welfare before any other object.'

'Yes,' said Endymion, 'you have all been most kind to me, and that makes me more wretched at the prospect of leaving you.'

'But there is no prospect of that?'

'A certainty, Imogene; there is going to be a change in my life,' and then he told her all.

'Well,' said Imogene, 'it would be selfish not to be happy at what I hear; but though I hope I am happy, I need not be joyful. I never used to be nervous, but I am afraid I am getting so. All these great changes rather shake me. This adventure of the prince — as Mr. Waldershare says, it is history. Then Miss Myra's great marriage, and your promotion — although they are exactly what we used to dream about, and wished a fairy would accomplish, and somehow felt that, somehow or other, they must happen — yet now they have occurred, one is almost as astounded as delighted. We certainly have been very happy in Warwick Street, at least I have been, all living, as it were, together. But where shall we be this time next year? All scattered, and perhaps not even the Rodneys under this roof. I know not how it is, but I dread leaving the roof where one has been happy.'

'Oh! you know you must leave it one day or other, Imogene. You are sure to marry; that you cannot avoid.'

'Well, I am not by any means sure about that,' said Imogene. 'Mr. Waldershare, in educating me, as he says, as a princess, has made me really neither

fish, flesh, nor fowl, nor even that coarser but popular delicacy never forgotten. I could not unite my life with a being who was not refined in mind and in manners, and the men of my class in life, who are the only ones after all who might care to marry me, shock my taste. I am ashamed to say so. I am not sure it is not wicked to think it even; but so it is.'

'Why do you not marry Waldershare?' said Endymion.

'That would be madness! I do not know any alliance that could prove more unfortunate. Mr. Waldershare must never marry. All people of imagination, they say, are difficult to live with; but a person who consists solely of imagination, like Mr. Waldershare, who has indeed no other attribute—before a year was past, married, he would fly to the desert or to La Trappe, commit terrible scandals from mere weariness of feeling, write pasquinades against the wife of his bosom, and hold us both up to the fierce laughter of the world. No, no; he is the best, the dearest, and the most romantic of friends; tender as a father, and sometimes as wise, for genius can be everything. He is going to rise early to-morrow, which he particularly dislikes, because he will not let me go to the station alone; though I tell him, as I often tell him, those are the becoming manners of my class.'

'But you might meet a person of the refinement you require,' said Endymion, 'with a moderate and yet a sufficient income, who would not be unworthy of you.'

'I doubt it,' said Imogene.

'But, do not doubt it, dear Imogene,' said Endymion, advancing, 'such charms as yours, both of body and

of mind, such a companion in life, so refined, so accomplished, and yet endowed with such clear sense, and such a sweet disposition — believe me' ——

But at this moment a splendid equipage drove up to the door, with powdered footmen and long canes behind, and then a terrible rap, like the tattoo of a field-marshal.

'Good gracious! what is all this?' exclaimed Imogene.

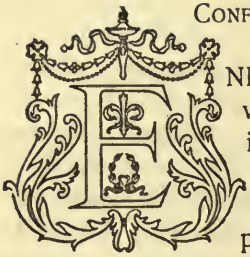
'It is my sister,' said Endymion, blushing; 'it is Lady Roehampton.'

'I must go to her myself,' said Imogene; 'I cannot have the servant attend upon your sister.'

Endymion remained silent and confused. Imogene was some little time at the carriage-door, for Lady Roehampton had inquiries to make after Sylvia and other courteous things to say, and then Imogene returned, and said to Endymion, 'Lady Roehampton wishes you to go with her directly on some particular business.'

CHAPTER XLIX.

Confidential Relations.



NDYMION liked his new official life very much. Whitehall was a great improvement on Somerset House, and he had sufficient experience of the civil service to duly appreciate the advantage of being permanently quartered in one of the chief departments of the state, instead of obscurely labouring in a subordinate office, with a limited future, and detached from all the keenly interesting details of public life. But it was not this permanent and substantial advantage which occasioned him such lively and such novel pleasure, as the fact of his being a private secretary, and a private secretary to a cabinet minister.

The relations between a minister and his secretary are, or at least should be, among the finest that can subsist between two individuals. Except the married state, there is none in which so great a degree of confidence is involved, in which more forbearance ought to be exercised, or more sympathy ought to exist. There is usually in the relation an identity of interest, and that of the highest kind; and the perpetual difficulties, the alternations of triumph and de-

feat, develop devotion. A youthful secretary will naturally feel some degree of enthusiasm for his chief, and a wise minister will never stint his regard for one in whose intelligence and honour he finds he can place confidence.

There never was a happier prospect of these relations being established on the most satisfactory basis than in the instance of Endymion and his new master. Mr. Sidney Wilton was a man of noble disposition, fine manners, considerable culture, and was generally gracious. But he was disposed to be more than gracious to Endymion, and when he found that our young friend had a capacity for work — that his perception was quick and clear — that he wrote with facility — never made difficulties — was calm, sedulous, and patient, the interest which Mr. Wilton took in him as the son of William Ferrars, and, we must add, as the brother of Lady Roehampton, became absorbed in the personal regard which the minister soon entertained for his secretary. Mr. Wilton found a pleasure in forming the mind of Endymion to the consideration and comprehension of public affairs; he spoke to him both of men and things without reserve; revealed to him the characters of leading personages on both sides, illustrated their antecedents, and threw light upon their future; taught him the real condition of parties in Parliament, rarely to be found in newspapers; and finally, when he was sufficiently initiated, obtained for his secretary a key for his cabinet boxes, which left little of the business of government unknown to Endymion.

Such great confidence, and that exhibited by one who possessed so many winning qualities, excited in the breast of Endymion the most lively feelings of

gratitude and regard. He tried to prove them by the vigilant and unwearying labour with which he served his master, and he served him every day more effectually, because every day he became more intimate with the mind and method of Mr. Wilton. Every one to a certain degree is a mannerist; every one has his ways; and a secretary will be assisted in the transaction of business if a vigilant observation has made him acquainted with the idiosyncrasy of his chief.

The regulations of the office which authorise a clerk, appointed to a private secretaryship, to deviate from the routine duties of the department, and devote his time entirely to the special requirements of his master, of course much assisted Endymion, and proved also a pleasant relief, for he had had enough at Somerset House of copying documents and drawing up formal reports. But it was not only at Whitehall that he saw Mr. Wilton, and experienced his kindness. Endymion was a frequent guest under Mr. Wilton's roof, and Mr. Wilton's establishment was one of the most distinguished in London. They met also much in the evenings, and always at Lady Roehampton's, where Mr. Wilton was never absent. Whenever and wherever they met, even if they had been working together the whole morning, Mr. Wilton always greeted Endymion with the utmost consideration — because he knew such a recognition would raise Endymion in the eyes of the social herd, who always observe little things, and generally form from them their opinions of great affairs.

CHAPTER L.

A New Friend.

MR. WILTON was at Charing Cross, on his way to his office, when a lady saluted him from her carriage, which then drew up to the pavement and stopped.

'We have just arrived,' said Lady Montfort, 'and I want you to give me a little dinner to-day. My lord is going to dine with an Old Bailey lawyer, who amuses him, and I do not like to be left, the first day, on the *pavé*.'

'I can give you a rather large dinner, if you care to come,' said Mr. Wilton, 'but I fear you will not like it. I have got some House of Commons men dining with me to-day, and one or two of the other House to meet them. My sister Georgina has very good-naturedly promised to come, with her husband, and I have just written a note to the Duchess Dowager of Keswick, who often helps me—but I fear this sort of thing would hardly suit you.'

'On the contrary, I think it will be very amusing. Only do not put me between two of your colleagues. Anybody amuses me for once. A new acquaintance is like a new book. I prefer it, even if bad, to a classic.'

The dinner party to-day at Mr. Wilton's was miscellaneous, and not heterogeneous enough to produce constraint, only to produce a little excitement — some commoners high in office, and the Treasury whip, several manufacturers who stood together in the room, and some metropolitan members. Georgina's husband, who was a lord-in-waiting, and a great swell, in a green riband, moved about with adroit condescension, and was bewitchingly affable. The manufacturing members whispered to each other that it was a wise thing to bring the two Houses together, but when Her Grace the Duchess Dowager of Keswick was announced, they exchanged glances of astounded satisfaction, and felt that the government, which had been thought to be in a somewhat rickety condition, would certainly stand.

Berengaria came a little late, not very. She thought it had been earlier, but it was not. The duchess dowager opened her eyes with wonderment when she beheld Lady Montfort, but the company in general were not in the least aware of the vast social event that was occurring. They were gratified in seeing another fine lady, but did not, of course, rank her with a duchess.

The dinner went off better than Mr. Wilton could have hoped, as it was impossible to place a stranger by Lady Montfort. He sat in the middle of his table with the duchess dowager on his right hand, and Berengaria, who was taken out by the green riband, on the other. As he knew the green riband would be soon exhausted, he devoted himself to Lady Montfort, and left the duchess to her own resources, which were considerable, and she was soon laying down her opinions on men and things to her other neighbours

with much effect. The manufacturers talked shop to each other in whispers, that is to say, mixed House of Commons tattle about bills and committees with news from Manchester and Liverpool, and the West Riding. The metropolitan members, then a more cosmopolitan body and highly miscellaneous in their character and pursuits, were louder, and perhaps more easy, even ventured to talk across the table when near its end, and enticed the peers into discussions on foreign politics.

Mr. Sidney Wilton having been delightful, thought it necessary to observe that he feared Lady Montfort had been bored. 'I have been, and am, extremely amused,' she replied; 'and now tell me, who is that young man at the very end of the table?'

'That is my private secretary, Mr. Ferrars.'

'Ferrars!'

'A brother of Lady Roehampton.'

'Present him to me after dinner.'

Endymion knew Lady Montfort by sight, though she did not know him. He had seen her more than once at the receptions of Mrs. Neuchatel, where, as indeed in every place, she was the cynosure. He was much astonished at meeting her at this party to-day,—almost as surprised as the duchess dowager, for Endymion, who was of an observant nature, was beginning to comprehend society and all its numerous elements, and schools, and shades, and classes. When they entered the saloon, Mr. Wilton led Endymion up to Lady Montfort at once, and she immediately inquired after his sister. 'Do you think,' she said, 'Lady Roehampton would see me to-morrow if I called on her?'

'If I were Lady Roehampton, I would,' said Endymion.

Lady Montfort looked at him with a glance of curious scrutiny; not smiling, and yet not displeased. 'I will write her a little note in the morning,' said Lady Montfort thoughtfully. 'One may leave cards for ever. Mr. Wilton tells me you are quite his right hand.'

'Mr. Wilton is too kind to me,' said Endymion. 'One could not be excused for not doing one's best for such a master.'

'You like people to be kind to you?' said Lady Montfort.

'Well, I have not met with so much kindness in this world as to have become insensible to it.'

'You are too young to be melancholy,' said Lady Montfort; 'are you older than Lady Roehampton?'

'We are twins.'

'Twins! and wonderfully like too! Is it not thought so?'

'I have sometimes heard it mentioned.'

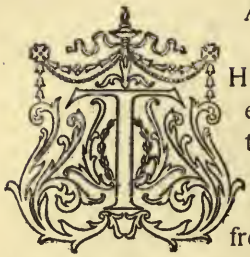
'Oh, it is striking!' said Lady Montfort, and she motioned to him to sit down by her; and then she began to talk politics, and asked him what the members thought at dinner of the prospects of the government, and what he had heard of the malcontent movement that they said was *in petto*. Endymion replied that Mr. Sharpset, the Secretary of the Treasury, did not think much of it.

'Well, I wish I did not,' said Lady Montfort. 'However, I will soon find out something about it. I have only just come to town; but I intend to open my house immediately. Now I must go. What are you going to do with yourself to-morrow? I wish you would come and dine with Lord Montfort. It will be quite without form, a few agreeable and amus-

ing people; Lord Montfort must be amused. It seems a reasonable fancy, but very difficult to realise; and now you shall ask for my carriage, and to-morrow I hope to be able to tell Lady Roehampton what very great pleasure I have had in making the acquaintance of her brother.'

CHAPTER LI.

An Old Friend.



HE morning after, Endymion was emerging from the court-yard of the Albany, in order to call on Mr. Rodney, who, as he had learnt from a casual remark in a letter from Waldershare, would be in town. The ladies were left behind for the last week of hunting, but business called Mr. Rodney home. Waldershare wrote to Endymion in the highest spirits, and more than once declared that he was the happiest of men. Just as Endymion had entered Piccadilly, he was stopped by a once familiar face; it was St. Barbe, who accosted him with great warmth, and as usual began to talk about himself. 'You are surprised to see me,' he said. 'It is two years since we met. Well, I have done wonders; carried all before me. By Jove, sir, I can walk into a minister's private room with as much ease as if I were entering the old den. The ambassadors are hand and glove with me. There are very few things I do not know. I have made the fortune of the *Chuck-Farthing,* trebled its circulation, and invented a new style, which has put me at the head of all "our own correspondents." I wish you were at Paris; I would give you a dinner at the

Rocher, which would make up for all our dinners at that ferocious ruffian, Joe's. I gave a dinner the other day to forty of them, all "our own correspondents," or such like. Do you know, my dear fellow, when I looked round the room, there was not a man who had not done his best to crush me; running down my works or not noticing them, or continually dilating on Gushy, as if the English public would never read anything else. Now, that was Christian-like of me, was not it? God! sir, if they only had but one neck, and I had been the Emperor Nero—but, I will not dwell on it; I hate them. However, it suits me to take the other line at present. I am all for fraternity and that sort of thing, and give them dinners. There is a reason why, but there is no time to talk about that now. I shall want their sweet voices—the hounds! But my dear fellow, I am truly glad to see you. Do you know, I always liked you; and how come you to be in this quarter this fine morning?'

'I live in the Albany,' said Endymion.

'You live in the Albany!' repeated St. Barbe, with an amazed and perturbed expression. 'I knew I could not be a Knight of the Garter, or a member of White's—the only two things an Englishman cannot command; but I did think I might some day live in the Albany. It was my dream. And you live there! Gracious! what an unfortunate fellow I am! I do not see how you can live in the Albany with your salary; I suppose they have raised you.'

'I have left Somerset House,' said Endymion, 'and am now at the Board of Trade, and am private secretary to Mr. Sidney Wilton.'

'Oh!' said St. Barbe; 'then we have friends at court. You may do something for me, if I only knew

what I wanted. They have no decorations here. Curse this aristocratic country, they want all the honours to themselves. I should like to be in the Board of Trade, and would make some sacrifice for it. The proprietors of the *Chuck-Farthing* pay well; they pay like gentlemen; though, why I say so I do not exactly know, for no gentleman ever paid me anything. But, if I could be a Secretary of the Board of Trade, or get £1500 a year secure, I would take it; and I dare say I could get employed on some treaties, as I speak French, and then I might get knighted.'

'Well, I think you are very well off,' said Endymion; 'carrying, as you say, everything before you. What more can you want?'

'I hate the craft,' said St. Barbe, with an expression of genuine detestation; 'I should like to show them all up before I died. I suppose it was your sister marrying a lord that got you on in this way. I could have married a countess myself, but then, to be sure, she was only a Polish one, and hard up. I never had a sister; I never had any luck in life at all. I wish I had been a woman. Women are the only people who get on. A man works all his life, and thinks he has done a wonderful thing if, with one leg in the grave and no hair on his head, he manages to get a coronet; and a woman dances at a ball with some young fellow or other, or sits next to some old fellow at dinner and pretends she thinks him charming, and he makes her a peeress on the spot. Oh! it is a disgusting world; it must end in revolution. Now you tell your master, Mr. Sidney Wilton, that if he wants to strengthen the institutions of this country, the government should establish an order of merit, and the press ought to be represented in it. I do not speak

only for myself; I speak for my brethren. Yes, sir, I am not ashamed of my order.'

And so they bade each other farewell.

'Unchanged,' thought Endymion, as he crossed Piccadilly; 'the vainest, the most envious, and the most amusing of men! I wonder what he will do in life.'

Mr. Rodney was at home, had just finished his breakfast, read his newspaper, and was about to 'go into the city.' His costume was perfect. Mr. Rodney's hat seemed always a new one. Endymion was a little embarrassed by this interview, for he had naturally a kind heart, and being young, it was still soft. The Rodneys had been truly good to him, and he was attached to them. Imogene had prepared Mr. Rodney for the change in Endymion's life, and Endymion himself had every reason to believe that in a worldly point of view the matter was entirely insignificant to his old landlord. Still, his visit this morning ratified a permanent separation from those with whom he had lived for a long time, and under circumstances of sympathy and family connection which were touching. He retained Mr. Rodney's hand for a moment as he expressed, and almost in faltering tones, his sorrow at their separation and his hope that their friendly connection might be always cherished.

'That feeling is reciprocal,' said Mr. Rodney. 'If only because you were the son of my revered and right honourable friend, you would always be esteemed here. But you are esteemed, or, I may say beloved, for your own sake. We shall be proud to be considered with kindness by you, and I echo your wish that, though no longer living under the same roof, we may yet, and even often, meet. But do not say

another word about the inconvenience you are occasioning us. The truth is, that although wherever we went the son of my revered and right honourable friend would have always commanded hospitality from us, there are many changes about to take place in our family which have made us for some time contemplate leaving Warwick Street. Affairs, especially of late, have gone pretty well with me in the world, —at least not badly; I have had friends, and I hope have proved not undeserving of them. I wish Sylvia, too, to live in an airier situation, near the park, so that she may ride every morning. Besides, I have a piece of news to communicate to you, which would materially affect our arrangements. We are going to lose Imogene.'

'Ah! she is going to be married,' said Endymion, blushing.

'She is going to be married,' said Mr. Rodney gravely.

'To Mr. Waldershare?' said Endymion. 'He almost said as much to me in a letter this morning. But I always thought so.'

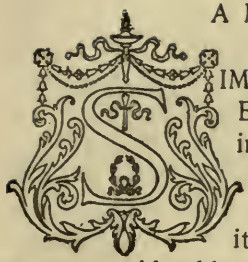
'No; not to Mr. Waldershare,' said Mr. Rodney.

'Who is the happy man then?' said Endymion, agitated. 'I truly call him so; for I think myself that Imogene is perfection.'

'Imogene is about to be married to the Earl of Beaumaris.'

CHAPTER LII.

A Martyr to Ennui.



IMON, Earl of Montfort, with whom Endymion was so unexpectedly going to dine, may be said to have been a minor in his cradle. Under ordinary circumstances, his inheritance would have been one of the most considerable in England. His castle in the north was one of the glories of the land, and becomingly crowned his vast domain. Under the old parliamentary system, he had the greatest number of nomination boroughs possessed by any Whig noble. The character and conduct of an individual so qualified were naturally much speculated on and finely scanned. Nothing very decided transpired about them in his boyhood, but certainly nothing adverse. He was good-looking and athletic, and was said to be generous and good-natured, and when he went to Harrow, he became popular. In his eighteenth year, while he was in correspondence with his guardians about going to Christ Church, he suddenly left his country without giving any one notice of his intentions, and entered into, and fulfilled, a vast scheme of adventurous travel. He visited countries then rarely reached, and some of which were almost unknown.

His flag had floated in the Indian Ocean, and he had penetrated the dazzling mysteries of Brazilian forests. When he was of age, he returned, and communicated with his guardians, as if nothing remarkable had happened in his life.

Lord Montfort had inherited a stud, which the family had kept for more than a century, and the sporting world remarked with satisfaction that their present representative appeared to take much interest in it. He had an establishment at Newmarket, and his horses were entered for all the great races of the kingdom. He appeared also at Melton, and conducted the campaign in a style becoming such a hero. His hunters and his cooks were both firstrate. Although he affected to take little interest in politics, the events of the time forced him to consider them and to act. Lord Grey wanted to carry his Reform Bill, and the sacrifice of Lord Montfort's numerous boroughs was a necessary ingredient in the spell. He was appealed to as the head of one of the greatest Whig houses, and he was offered a dukedom. He relinquished his boroughs without hesitation, but he preferred to remain with one of the oldest earldoms of England for his chief title. All honours, however, clustered about him, though he never sought them, and in the same year he tumbled into the Lord Lieutenancy of his county, unexpectedly vacant, and became the youngest Knight of the Garter.

Society was looking forward with the keenest interest to the impending season, when Lord Montfort would formally enter its spell-bound ranks, and multiform were the speculations on his destiny. He attended an early levée, in order that he might be presented — a needful ceremony which had not yet

taken place — and then again quitted his country, and for years. He was heard of in every capital except his own. Wonderful exploits at St. Petersburg, and Paris, and Madrid, deeds of mark at Vienna, and eccentric adventures at Rome; but poor Melton, alas! expecting him to return every season, at last embalmed him, and his cooks, and his hunters, and his daring saddle, as a tradition,—jealous a little of Newmarket, whither, though absent, he was frequently transmitting foreign blood, and where his horses still ran, and were often victorious.

At last it would appear that the restless Lord Montfort had found his place, and that place was Paris. There he dwelt for years in sybaritic seclusion. He built himself a palace, which he called a villa, and which was the most fanciful of structures, and full of every beautiful object which rare taste and boundless wealth could procure, from undoubted Raffaelles to jewelled toys. It was said that Lord Montfort saw no one; he certainly did not court or receive his own countrymen, and this perhaps gave rise to, or at least caused to be exaggerated, the tales that were rife of his profusion, and even his profligacy. But it was not true that he was entirely isolated. He lived much with the old families of France in their haughty faubourg, and was highly considered by them. It was truly a circle for which he was adapted. Lord Montfort was the only living Englishman who gave one an idea of the nobleman of the eighteenth century. He was totally devoid of the sense of responsibility, and he looked what he resembled. His manner, though simple and natural, was finished and refined, and, free from forbidding reserve, was yet characterised by an air of serious grace.

With the exception of the memorable year when he sacrificed his nomination boroughs to the cause for which Hampden died on the field and Sidney on the scaffold—that is to say, the Whig government of England—Lord Montfort had been absent from his country for ten years, and one day, in his statued garden at the Belvedere, he asked himself what he had gained by it. There was no subject, divine or human, in which he took the slightest interest. He entertained for human nature generally, and without any exception, the most cynical appreciation. He had a sincere and profound conviction, that no man or woman ever acted except from selfish and interested motives. Society was intolerable to him; that of his own sex and station wearisome beyond expression; their conversation consisted only of two subjects, horses and women, and he had long exhausted both. As for female society, if they were ladies, it was expected that, in some form or other, he should make love to them, and he had no sentiment. If he took refuge in the *demi-monde,* he encountered vulgarity, and that, to Lord Montfort, was insufferable. He had tried them in every capital, and vulgarity was the badge of all their tribe. He had attempted to read; a woman had told him to read French novels, but he found them only a clumsy representation of the life which, for years, he had practically been leading. An accident made him acquainted with Rabelais and Montaigne; and he had relished them, for he had a fine sense of humour. He might have pursued these studies, and perhaps have found in them a slight and occasional distraction, but a clever man he met at a *guingette* at Passy, whither he had gone to try to dissipate his weariness in disguise, had convinced

him, that if there were a worthy human pursuit, an assumption which was doubtful, it was that of science, as it impressed upon man his utter insignificance.

No one could say Lord Montfort was a bad-hearted man, for he had no heart. He was good-natured, provided it brought him no inconvenience; and as for temper, his was never disturbed, but this not from sweetness of disposition, rather from a contemptuous fine taste, which assured him, that a gentleman should never be deprived of tranquillity in a world where nothing was of the slightest consequence.

The result of these reflections was, that he was utterly wearied with Belvedere and Paris, and as his mind was now rather upon science, he fancied he should like to return to a country where it flourished, and where he indulged in plans of erecting colossal telescopes, and of promoting inquiry into the origin of things. He thought that with science and with fishing, the only sport to which he still really clung, for he liked the lulling influence of running streams, and a pastime he could pursue in loneliness, existence might perhaps be endured.

Society was really surprised when they heard of the return of Lord Montfort to England. He came back in the autumn, so that there should be no season to encounter, and his flag was soon flying at his castle. There had been continuous attacks for years on the government for having made an absentee lord lieutenant of his county, and conferring the high distinction of the Garter on so profligate a character. All this made his return more interesting and exciting.

A worthy nobleman of high rank and of the same county, who for the last five years everybody, shak-

ing everybody's head, had been saying ought to have been lord lieutenant, had a great county function in his immediate neighbourhood in the late autumn, and had invited a large party to assist him in its celebration. It seemed right also to invite the lord lieutenant, but no one expected that he would make his appearance. On the contrary, the invitation was accepted, and the sensation was great. What would he be like, and what would he do, and was he so very wicked as the county newspaper said? He came, this wicked man, with his graceful presence and his diamond star, and everybody's heart palpitated with a due mixture of terror and admiration. The only exception to these feelings was the daughter of the house, the Lady Berengaria. She was then in her second season, but still unparagoned, for she was a fastidious, not to say disdainful lady. The highest had been at her feet, and sued in vain. She was a stirring spirit, with great ambition and a daring will; never content except in society, and influencing it — for which she was qualified by her grace and lively fancy, her ready though capricious sympathy, and her passion for admiration.

The function was successful, and the county full of enthusiasm for their lord lieutenant, whose manner quite cleared his character. The party did not break up, in fact the function was only an excuse for the party. There was sport of all kinds, and in the evenings a carnival — for Lady Berengaria required everybody about her to be gay and diverting — games and dances, and infinite frolic. Lord Montfort, who, to the surprise of every one, did not depart, spoke to her a little, and perhaps would not have spoken at all, had they not met in the hunting-field. Lady

Berengaria was a firstrate horsewoman, and really in the saddle looked irresistible.

The night before the party, which had lasted a week, broke up, Lord Montfort came and sat by Lady Berengaria. He spoke about the run of the morning, and she replied in the same vein. 'I have got a horse, Lady Berengaria, which I should like you to ride. Would you do so?'

'Certainly, and what sort of horse is it?'

'You shall see to-morrow. It is not far off. I like to have some horses always near,' and then he walked away.

It was a dark chestnut of matchless beauty. Lady Berengaria, who was of an emphatic nature, was loud in her admiration of its beauty and its hunting qualities.

'I agree with you,' said Lord Montfort, 'that it will spoil you for any other horse, and therefore I shall ask permission to leave it here for your use.'

The party broke up, but, strange to say, Lord Montfort did not depart. It was a large family. Lady Berengaria had several sisters; her eldest brother was master of the hounds, and her younger brothers were asserting their rights as cadets, and killing their father's pheasants. There was also a number of cousins, who were about the same age, and were always laughing, though it was never quite clear what it was about. An affectation of gaiety may be sometimes detected in youth.

As Lord Montfort always had the duty of ushering the lady of the house to dinner, he never had the opportunity of conversing with Lady Berengaria, even had he wished it; but it was not all clear that he did wish it, and it seemed that he talked as much to her

sisters and the laughing cousins as to herself, but still he did not go away, which was most strange, and commenced to be embarrassing.

At last one evening, both her parents slumbering, one over the newspaper and the other over her work, and the rest of the party in a distant room playing at some new game amid occasional peals of laughter, Lord Montfort, who had been sitting for some time by Lady Berengaria's side, and only asking now and then a question, though often a searching one, in order to secure her talking to him, rather abruptly said, 'I wonder if anything would ever induce you to marry me?'

This was the most startling social event of the generation. Society immediately set a-wondering how it would turn out, and proved very clearly that it must turn out badly. Men who knew Montfort well at Paris looked knowing, and said they would give it six months.

But the lady was as remarkable as a woman as the bridegroom was in his sex. Lady Berengaria was determined to be the Queen of Society, and had confidence in her unlimited influence over man. It is, however, rather difficult to work on the feelings of a man who has no heart. This she soon found out, and to her dismay, but she kept it a profound secret. By endless ingenuity on her part, affairs went on very well much longer than the world expected, and long enough to fulfil the object of Lady Berengaria's life. Lord Montfort launched his wife well, and seemed even content to be occasionally her companion until she had mounted the social throne. He was proud of her as he would be of one of his beautiful horses; but when all the world had acknowledged the influence

of Berengaria, he fell into one of his old moods, and broke to her that he could bear it no longer, and that he must retire from society. Lady Montfort looked distressed, but, resolved under no circumstances to be separated from her husband, whom she greatly admired, and to whom, had he wished it, she could have become even passionately attached, signified her readiness to share his solitude. But she then found out that this was not what he wanted. It was not only retirement from society, but retirement from Lady Montfort, that was indispensable. In short, at no time of his perverse career had Lord Montfort been more wilful.

During the last years of his residence in Paris, when he was shut up in his delicious Belvedere, he had complained much of the state of his health, and one of his principal pursuits was consulting the faculty on this interesting subject. The faculty were unanimous in their opinion that the disorder from which their patient was suffering was *Ennui*. This persistent opinion irritated him, and was one of the elements of his decision to leave the country. The unexpected distraction that followed his return to his native land had made him neglect or forget his sad indisposition, but it appears that it had now returned, and in an aggravated form. Unhappily the English physicians took much the same view of the case as their French brethren. They could find nothing organically wrong in the constitution or condition of Lord Montfort, and recommended occupation and society. At present he shrank with some disgust at the prospect of returning to France, and he had taken it into his head that the climate of Montfort did not agree with him. He was convinced that he must live in the south of England.

One of the most beautiful and considerable estates in that favoured part of our country was virtually in the market, and Lord Montfort, at the cost of half a million, became the proprietor of Princedown. And here he announced that he should dwell and die.

This state of affairs was a bitter trial to the proudest woman in England, but Lady Montfort was also one of the most able. She resisted nothing, sympathised with all his projects, and watched her opportunity when she could extract from his unconscious good-nature some reasonable modification of them. And she ultimately succeeded in establishing a *modus vivendi*. He was to live and die at Princedown; that was settled; but if he ever came to town, to consult his physicians, for example, he was always to inhabit Montfort House, and if she occasionally required a whiff of southern air, she was to have her rooms always ready for her at Princedown. She would not interfere with him in the least; he need not even see her, if he were too unwell. Then as to the general principle of his life, it was quite clear that he was not interested in anything, and never would be interested in anything; but there was no reason that he should not be amused. This distinction between interest and amusement rather pleased, and seemed to satisfy Lord Montfort—but then it was difficult to amuse him. The only thing that ever amused him, he said, were his wife's letters, and as he was the most selfish as well as the most polite of men, he requested her to write to him every day. Great personages, who are selfish and whimsical, are generally surrounded by parasites and buffoons, but this would not suit Lord Montfort; he sincerely detested flattery, and he wearied in eight-

and-forty hours of the most successful mountebank in society. What he seemed inclined to was the society of men of science, of travellers in rare parts, and of clever artists; in short, of all persons who had what he called 'idiosyncrasy.' Civil engineering was then beginning to attract general attention, and Lord Montfort liked the society of civil engineers; but what he liked most were self-formed men, and to learn the secret of their success, and how they made their fortunes. After the first fit of Princedown was over, Lord Montfort found that it was impossible, even with all its fascination, to secure a constant, or sufficient, presence of civil engineers in such distant parts, and so he got into the habit of coming up to Montfort House, that he might find companions and be amused. Lady Montfort took great pains that he should not be disappointed, and catered for him with all the skill of an accomplished *chef*. Then, when the occasion served, she went down to Princedown herself with welcome guests — and so it turned out, that circumstances, which treated by an ordinary mind must have led to a social scandal, were so adroitly manipulated that the world little apprehended the real and somewhat mortifying state of affairs. With the utmost license of ill-nature, they could not suppose that Lord and Lady Montfort, living under the same roof, might scarcely see each other for weeks, and that his communications with her were generally made in writing.

Lady Montfort never could agree with her husband in the cardinal assumption of his philosophy. One of his reasons for never doing anything was, that there was nothing for him to attain. He had got everything. Here they at once separated in their

conclusions. Lady Montfort maintained that they had got nothing. 'What,' she would say, 'are rank and wealth to us? We were born to them. We want something that we were not born to. You reason like a parvenu. Of course, if you had created your rank and your riches, you might rest on your oars, and find excitement in the recollection of what you had achieved. A man of your position ought to govern the country, and it always was so in old days. Your family were prime ministers; why not you, with as much talent, and much more knowledge?'

'You would make a very good prime minister, Berengaria.'

'Ah! you always jest; I am serious.'

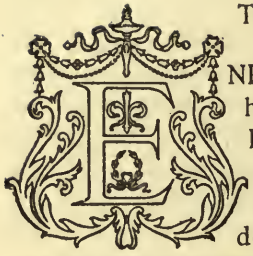
'And so am I. If I ever am to work, I would sooner be a civil engineer than a prime minister.'

Nothing but the indomitable spirit of Lady Montfort could fight successfully against such obstacles to her schemes of power as were presented by the peculiar disposition of her lord. Her receptions every Saturday night during the season were the most important of social gatherings, but she held them alone. It was by consummate skill that she had prevailed upon her lord to appear occasionally at the preceding banquets, and when they were over, he flitted for an instant and disappeared. At first, he altogether refused, but then Lady Montfort would induce Royalty, always kind, to condescend to express a wish to dine at Montfort House, and that was a gracious intimation it was impossible not to act upon, and then, as Lady Montfort would say, 'I trust much to the periodical visits of that dear Queen of Mesopotamia. He must entertain her, for his father was her lover.'

In this wonderful mystification, by which Lord Montfort was made to appear as living in a society which he scarcely ever entered, his wife was a little assisted by his visits to Newmarket, which he even frequently attended. He never made a bet or a new acquaintance, but he seemed to like meeting men with whom he had been at school. There is certainly a magic in the memory of school-boy friendships; it softens the heart, and even affects the nervous system of those who have no hearts. Lord Montfort at Newmarket would ask half a dozen men who had been at school with him, and were now members of the Jockey Club, to be his guests, and the next day all over the heath, and after the heath, all over Mayfair and Belgravia, you heard only one speech, 'I dined yesterday,' or 'the other day,' as the case might be, 'with Montfort; out and out the best dinner I ever had, and such an agreeable fellow; the wittiest, the most amusing, certainly the most charming fellow that ever lived; out and out! It is a pity he does not show a little more.' And society thought the same; they thought it a pity, and a great one, that this fascinating being of whom they rarely caught a glimpse, and who to them took the form of a wasted and unsympathising phantom, should not show a little more and delight them. But the most curious thing was, that however rapturous were his guests, the feelings of their host after they had left him, were by no means reciprocal. On the contrary, he would remark to himself, 'Have I heard a single thing worth remembering? Not one.'

CHAPTER LIII.

The Montforts.



NDYMION was a little agitated when he arrived at the door of Montfort House, a huge family mansion, situate in a court-yard and looking into the Green Park. When the door was opened he found himself in a large hall with many servants, and he was ushered through several rooms on the ground floor into a capacious chamber dimly lighted, where there were several gentlemen, but not his hostess. His name was announced, and then a young man came up to him and mentioned that Lord and Lady Montfort would soon be present, and then talked to him about the weather. The Count of Ferroll arrived after Endymion, and then another gentleman whose name he could not catch. Then while he was making some original observations on the east wind, and, to confess the truth, feeling anything but at his ease, the folding doors of a further chamber brilliantly lighted were thrown open, and almost at the same moment Lady Montfort entered, and, taking the Count of Ferroll's arm, walked into the dining-room. It was a round table, and Endymion was told by the same

gentleman who had already addressed him, that he was to sit by Lady Montfort.

'Lord Montfort is a little late to-day,' she said, 'but he wished me not to wait for him. And how are you after our parliamentary banquet?' she said, turning to Endymion; 'I will introduce you to the Count of Ferroll.'

The Count of Ferroll was a young man, and yet inclined to be bald. He was chief of a not inconsiderable mission at our court. Though not to be described as a handsome man, his countenance was striking; a brow of much intellectual development, and a massive jaw. He was tall, broad-shouldered, with a slender waist. He greeted Endymion with a penetrating glance, and then with a winning smile.

The Count of Ferroll was the representative of a kingdom which, if not exactly created, had been moulded into a certain form of apparent strength and importance by the Congress of Vienna. He was a noble of considerable estate in a country where possessions were not extensive or fortunes large, though it was ruled by an ancient, and haughty, and warlike aristocracy.

Like all of his class, the Count of Ferroll had received a military education; but when that education was completed he found but a feeble prospect of his acquirements being called into action. It was believed that the age of great wars had ceased, and that even revolutions were for the future to be controlled by diplomacy. As he was a man of an original, not to say eccentric, turn of mind, the Count of Ferroll was not contented with the resources and distraction of his second-rate capital. He was an eminent sportsman, and, for some time, took refuge and found ex-

citement in the breadth of his dark forests, and in the formation of a stud, which had already become celebrated. But all this time, even in the excitement of the chase, and in the raising of his rare-bred steeds, the Count of Ferroll might be said to have been brooding over the position of what he could scarcely call his country, but rather an aggregation of lands baptized by protocols, and christened and consolidated by treaties which he looked upon as eminently untrustworthy. One day he surprised his sovereign, with whom he was a favourite, by requesting to be appointed to the legation at London, which was vacant. The appointment was at once made, and the Count of Ferroll had now been two years at the Court of St. James'.

The Count of Ferroll was a favourite in English society, for he possessed every quality which there conduces to success. He was of great family and of distinguished appearance, munificent and singularly frank; was a dead-shot, and the boldest of riders, with horses which were the admiration alike of Melton and Newmarket. The ladies also approved of him, for he was a consummate waltzer, and mixed with a badinage gaily cynical a tone that could be tender and a bewitching smile.

But his great friend was Lady Montfort. He told her everything, and consulted her on everything; and though he rarely praised anybody, it had reached her ears that the Count of Ferroll had said more than once that she was a greater woman than Louise of Savoy or the Duchesse de Longueville.

There was a slight rustling in the room. A gentleman had entered and glided into his unoccupied chair, which his valet had guarded. 'I fear I am not

in time for an oyster,' said Lord Montfort to his neighbour.

The gentleman who had first spoken to Endymion was the secretary of Lord Montfort; then there was a great genius who was projecting a suspension bridge over the Tyne, and that was in Lord Montfort's country. A distinguished officer of the British Museum completed the party, with a person who sat opposite Endymion, and whom in the dim twilight he had not recognised, but whom he now beheld with no little emotion. It was Nigel Penruddock. They had not met since his mother's funeral, and the associations of the past agitated Endymion. They exchanged recognitions; that of Nigel was grave but kind.

The conversation was what is called general, and a great deal on suspension bridges. Lord Montfort himself led off on this, in order to bring out his distinguished guest. The Count of Ferroll was also interested on this subject, as his own government was making inquiries on the matter. The gentleman from the British Museum made some remarks on the mode in which the ancient Egyptians moved masses of granite, and quoted Herodotus to the civil engineer. The civil engineer had never heard of Herodotus, but he said he was going to Egypt in the autumn by desire of Mehemet Ali, and he would undertake to move any mass which was requisite, even if it were a pyramid itself. Lady Montfort, without disturbing the general conversation, whispered in turns to the Count of Ferroll and Endymion, and told the latter that she had paid a visit to Lady Roehampton in the morning — a most delightful visit. There was no person she admired so much as his sister; she quite loved her. The only person who was silent was Nigel, but Lady

Montfort, who perceived everything, addressed him across the table with enthusiasm about some changes he had made in the services of some church, and the countenance of Nigel became suffused like a young saint who has a glimpse of Paradise.

After dinner Lady Montfort led Endymion to her lord, and left him seated by his host. Lord Montfort was affable and natural in his manner. He said, 'I have not yet made the acquaintance of Lady Roehampton, for I never go out; but I hope to do so, for Lady Montfort tells me she is quite captivating.'

'She is a very good sister,' said Endymion.

'Lady Montfort has told me a good deal about yourself, and all of it I was glad to hear. I like young men who rise by their merits, and Mr. Sidney Wilton tells Lady Montfort that yours are distinguished.'

'Mr. Sidney Wilton is a kind master, sir.'

'Well, I was his fag at Harrow, and I thought him so,' said Lord Montfort. 'And now about your office; tell me what you do. You were not there first, Lady Montfort says. Where were you first? Tell me all about it. I like detail.'

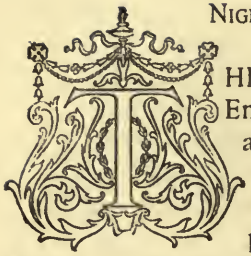
It was impossible to resist such polished and amiable curiosity, and Endymion gratified it with youthful grace. He even gave Lord Montfort a sketch of St. Barbe, inspired probably by the interview of the morning. Lord Montfort was quite amused with this, and said he should so much like to know Mr. St. Barbe. It was clear, when the party broke up, that Endymion had made a favourable impression, for Lord Montfort said, 'You came here to-day as Lady Montfort's friend, but you must come in future as mine also. And will you understand, I dine at home every

day when I am in town, and I give you a general invitation. Come as often as you like; you will be always welcome. Only let the house know your intention an hour before dinner-time, as I have a particular aversion to the table being crowded, or seeing an empty chair.'

Lady Montfort had passed much of the evening in earnest conversation with Nigel, and when the guests quitted the room, Nigel and Endymion walked away together.

CHAPTER LIV.

Nigel Appears Again.



HE meeting between Nigel and Endymion was not an ordinary one, and when they were at length alone, neither of them concealed his feelings of pleasure and surprise at its occurrence. Nigel had been a curate in the northern town which was defended by Lord Montfort's proud castle, and his labours and reputation had attracted the attention of Lady Montfort. Under the influence of his powerful character, the services of his church were celebrated with a precision and an imposing effect which soon occasioned a considerable excitement in the neighbourhood, in time even in the county. The pulpit was frequently at his command, for his rector, who had imbibed his Church views, was not equal to the task of propagating them, and the power and fame of Nigel as a preacher began to be much rumoured.

Although the church where he officiated was not that which Lady Montfort usually attended, she was soon among his congregation and remained there. He became a constant guest at the castle, and Lady Montfort presented his church with a reredos of al-

abaster. She did more than this. Her enthusiasm exceeded her selfishness, for though the sacrifice was great which would deprive her of the ministrations and society of Nigel in the country, she prevailed upon the prime minister to prefer him to a new church in London, which had just fallen vacant, and which, being situated in a wealthy and populous district, would afford him the opportunity of making known to the world his eloquence and genius. This was Nigel's simple, yet not uneventful history; and then, in turn, he listened to Endymion's brief but interesting narrative of his career, and then they agreed to adjourn to Endymion's chambers and have a good talk over the past and the present.

'That Lady Montfort is a great woman,' said Nigel, standing with his back to the fire. 'She has it in her to be another Empress Helena.'

'Indeed!'

'I believe she has only one thought, and that the only thought worthy the human mind—the Church. I was glad to meet you at her house. You have cherished, I hope, those views which in your boyhood you so fervently and seriously embraced.'

'I am rather surprised,' said Endymion, not caring to answer this inquiry, 'at a Whig lady entertaining such high views in these matters. The Liberal party rather depends on the Low Church.'

'I know nothing about Whigs or Tories or Liberals, or any other new names which they invent,' said Nigel. 'Nor do I know, or care to know, what Low Church means. There is but one Church, and it is catholic and apostolic; and if we act on its principles, there will be no need, and there ought to be no need, for any other form of government.'

'Well, those are very distinct views,' said Endymion, 'but are they as practical as they are clear?'

'Why should they not be practical? Everything is practical which we believe; and in the long run, which is most likely that we should believe, what is taught by God, or what is taught by man?'

'I confess,' said Endymion, 'that in all matters, both civil and religious, I incline to what is moderate and temperate. I always trace my dear father's sad end, and all the terrible events in my family, to his adopting in 1829 the views of the extreme party. If he had only followed the example and the advice of his best friend, Mr. Sidney Wilton, what a different state of affairs might have occurred!'

'I know nothing about politics,' said Nigel. 'By being moderate and temperate in politics I suppose you mean being adroit, and doing that which is inexpedient and which will probably be successful. But the Church is founded on absolute truth, and teaches absolute truth, and there can be no compromise on such matters.'

'Well, I do not know,' said Endymion, 'but surely there are many very religious people who do not accept without reserve everything that is taught by the Church. I hope I am a religious person myself, and yet, for example, I cannot give an unreserved assent to the whole of the Athanasian Creed.'

'The Athanasian Creed is the most splendid ecclesiastical lyric ever poured forth by the genius of man. I give to every clause of it an implicit assent. It does not pretend to be divine; it is human, but the Church has hallowed it, and the Church ever acts under the influence of the Divine Spirit. St. Athanasius was by far the greatest man that ever existed.

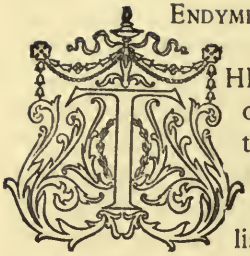
If you cavil at his creed, you will soon cavil at other symbols. I was prepared for infidelity in London, but I confess, my dear Ferrars, you alarm me. I was in hopes that your early education would have saved you from this backsliding.'

'But let us be calm, my dear Nigel. Do you mean to say, that I am to be considered an infidel or an apostate, because, although I fervently embrace all the vital truths of religion, and try, on the whole to regulate my life by them, I may have scruples about believing, for example, in the personality of the devil?'

'If the personality of Satan be not a vital principle of your religion, I do not know what is. There is only one dogma higher. You think it is safe, and I dare say it is fashionable, to fall into this lax and really thoughtless discrimination between what is and what is not to be believed. It is not good taste to believe in the devil. Give me a single argument against his personality which is not applicable to the personality of the Deity. Will you give that up, and if so, where are you? Now mark me; you and I are young men — you are a very young man. This is the year of grace 1839. If these loose thoughts, which you have heedlessly taken up, prevail in this country for a generation or so — five-and-twenty or thirty years — we may meet again, and I shall have to convince you that there is a God.'

CHAPTER LV.

Endymion Becomes the Fashion.



THE balance of parties in the House of Commons, which had been virtually restored by Sir Robert Peel's dissolution of 1834, might be said to be formally and positively established by the dissolution of Parliament in the autumn of 1837, occasioned by the demise of the Crown. The ministerial majority became almost nominal, while troubles from all quarters seemed to press simultaneously upon them: Canadian revolts, Chartist insurrections, Chinese squabbles, and mysterious complications in Central Asia, which threatened immediate hostilities with Persia, and even with one of the most powerful of European empires. In addition to all this, the revenue continually declined, and every day the general prejudice became more intense against the Irish policy of the ministry. The extreme popularity of the Sovereign, reflecting some lustre on her ministers, had enabled them, though not without difficulty, to tide through the session of 1838; but when Parliament met in 1839 their prospects were dark, and it was known that there was a section of the extreme Liberals who would not be deeply mor-

tified if the government were overthrown. All efforts, therefore, political and social, and particularly the latter, in which the Whigs excelled, were to be made to prevent or to retard the catastrophe.

Lady Montfort and Lady Roehampton opened their houses to the general world at an unusually early period. Their entertainments rivalled those of Zenobia, who with unflagging gallantry, her radiant face prescient of triumph, stopped her bright vis-à-vis and her tall footmen in the midst of St. James' Street or Pall Mall, while she rapidly inquired from some friendly passer-by whom she had observed, 'Tell me the names of the Radical members who want to turn out the government, and I will invite them directly.'

Lady Montfort had appropriated the Saturdays, as was her custom and her right; so Myra, with the advice of Lord Roehampton, had fixed on Wednesdays for her receptions.

'I should have liked to have taken Wednesdays,' said Zenobia, 'but I do not care to seem to be setting up against Lady Roehampton, for her mother was my dearest friend. Not that I think any quarter ought to be shown to her after joining those atrocious Whigs, but to be sure she was corrupted by her husband, whom I remember the most thorough Tory going. To be sure, I was a Whig myself in those days, so one must not say too much about it, but the Whigs then were gentlemen. I will tell you what I will do. I will receive both on Saturdays and Wednesdays It is an effort, and I am not as young as I was, but it will only be for a season or less, for I know these people cannot stand. It will be all over by May.'

Prince Florestan had arrived in town, and was now settled in his mansion in Carlton Terrace. It was the fashion among the *crème de la crème* to keep aloof from him. The Tories did not love revolutionary dynasties, and the Whigs being in office could not sanction a pretender, and one who, they significantly intimated with a charitable shrug of the shoulders, was not a very scrupulous one. The prince himself, though he was not insensible to the charms of society, and especially of agreeable women, was not much chagrined by this. The world thought that he had fitted up his fine house, and bought his fine horses, merely for the enjoyment of life. His purposes were very different. Though his acquaintances were limited, they were not undistinguished, and he lived with them in intimacy. There had arisen between himself and Mr. Waldershare the closest alliance both of thought and habits. They were rarely separated. The prince was also a frequent guest at the Neuchatels', and was a favourite with the head of the house.

The Duke of St. Angelo controlled the household at Carlton Gardens with skill. The appointments were finished and the cuisine refined. There was a dinner twice a week, from which Waldershare was rarely absent, and to which Endymion, whom the prince always treated with kindness, had a general invitation. When he occasionally dined there he met always several foreign guests, and all men apparently of mark—at any rate, all distinguished by their intelligence. It was an interesting and useful house for a young man, and especially a young politician, to frequent. Endymion heard many things and learnt many things which otherwise would not have met

his ear or mind. The prince encouraged conversation, though himself inclined to taciturnity. When he did speak, his terse remarks and condensed views were striking, and were remembered. On the days on which he did not receive, the prince dined at the Travellers' Club, to which Waldershare had obtained his introduction, and generally with Waldershare, who took this opportunity of gradually making his friend acquainted with eminent and influential men, many of whom in due time became guests at Carlton Terrace. It was clear, indeed, that these club-dinners were part of a system.

The prince, soon after his arrival in town, while riding, had passed Lady Roehampton's carriage in the park, and he had saluted her with a grave grace which distinguished him. She was surprised at feeling a little agitated by this rencontre. It recalled Hainault, her not mortifying but still humble position beneath that roof, the prince's courtesy to her under those circumstances, and, indeed, his marked preference for her society. She felt it something like ingratitude to treat him with neglect now, when her position was so changed and had become so elevated. She mentioned to Lord Roehampton, while they were dining alone, that she should like to invite the prince to her receptions, and asked his opinion on the point. Lord Roehampton shrugged his shoulders and did not encourage her. 'You know, my darling, our people do not much like him. They look upon him as a pretender, as having forfeited his parole, and as a refugee from justice. I have no prejudices against him myself, and perhaps in the same situation might have acted in the same manner; but if he is to be admitted into society, it should hardly be at a minis-

terial reception, and of all houses, that of one who holds my particular post.'

'I know nothing about his forfeiting his parole,' said Lady Roehampton; 'the charge is involved in mystery, and Mr. Waldershare told me it was an entire fabrication. As for his being a pretender, he seems to me as legitimate a prince as most we meet; he was born in the purple, and his father was recognised by every government in Europe except our own. As for being a refugee from justice, a prince in captivity has certainly a right to escape if he can, and his escape was romantic. However, I will not contest any decision of yours, for I think you are always right. Only I am disappointed, for, to say nothing of the unkindness, I cannot help feeling our not noticing him is rather shabby.'

There was silence, a longer silence than usually occurred in *tête-à-tête* dinners between Lord and Lady Roehampton. To break the silence he began to converse on another subject, and Lady Roehampton replied to him cheerfully, but curtly. He saw she was vexed, and this great man, who was at that time meditating one of the most daring acts of modern diplomacy, who had the reputation, in the conduct of public affairs, of not only being courageous, but of being stern, inflexible, unfeeling, and unscrupulous beyond ordinary statesmen, who had passed his mornings in writing a menacing despatch to a great power and intimating combinations to the ambassadors of other firstrate states which they almost trembled to receive, was quite upset by seeing his wife chagrined. At last, after another embarrassing pause, he said gaily, 'Do you know, my dear Myra, I do not see why you should not ask Prince Florestan. It is you

that ask him, not I. That is one of the pleasant results of our system of political entertainments. The guests come to pay their respects to the lady of the house, so no one is committed. The prince may visit you on Wednesday just as well as the leaders of the opposition who want our places, or the malcontent Radicals who they say are going to turn us out.'

So Prince Florestan was invited to Lady Roehampton's receptions, and he came; and he never missed one. His visits were brief. He appeared, made his bow, had the pleasure of some slight conversation with her, and then soon retired. Received by Lady Roehampton, in time, though sluggishly, invitations arrived from other houses, but he rarely availed himself of them. He maintained in this respect great reserve, and was accustomed to say that the only fine lady in London who had ever been kind to him was Lady Roehampton.

All this time Endymion, who was now thoroughly planted in society, saw a great deal of the Neuchatels, who had returned to Portland Place at the beginning of February. He met Adriana almost every evening, and was frequently invited to the house—to the grand dinners now, as well as the domestic circle. In short, our Endymion was fast becoming a young man of fashion and a personage. The brother of Lady Roehampton had now become the private secretary of Mr. Sidney Wilton and the great friend of Lady Montfort. He was indeed only one of the numerous admirers of that lady, but he seemed not the least smiled on. There was never anything delightful at Montfort House at which he was not present, or indeed in any other place, for under her influence,

invitations from the most distinguished houses crowded his mantelpiece and were stuck all round his looking-glass.

Endymion, in this whirl of fashion, did not forget his old friends. He took care that Seymour Hicks should have a frequent invitation to Lady Roehampton's assemblies. Seymour Hicks only wanted a lever to raise the globe, and this introduction supplied him with one. It was astonishing how he made his way in society, and though, of course, he never touched the empyrean regions in which Endymion now breathed, he gradually, and at last rapidly, planted himself in a world which to the uninitiated figures as the very realm of nobility and fashion, and where doubtless is found a great fund of splendour, refinement, and amusement. Seymour Hicks was not ill-favoured, and was always well dressed, and he was very civil, but what he really owed his social advancement to was his indomitable will. That quality governs all things, and though the will of Seymour Hicks was directed to what many may deem a petty or a contracted purpose, life is always interesting when you have a purpose and live in its fulfilment. It appeared from what he told Endymion that matters at the office had altered a good deal since he left it. The retirement of St. Barbe was the first brick out of the wall; now, which Endymion had not yet heard, the brother of Trenchard had most unexpectedly died, and that gentleman had come into a good estate.

'Jawett remains, and is editor of the *Precursor*, but his new labours so absorb his spare time that he is always at the office of the paper. So it is pretty well all over with the table at Joe's. I confess I could not stand it any longer, particularly after you

left. I have got into the junior Pan-Ionian; and I am down for the senior; I cannot get in for ten years, but when I do it will be a *coup;* the society there is tiptop, a cabinet minister sometimes, and very often a bishop.'

CHAPTER LVI.

The Prince's Star of Destiny.

ENDYMION was glad to meet Baron Sergius one day when he dined with Prince Florestan. There were several distinguished foreigners among the guests who had just arrived. They talked much, and with much emphasis. One of them, the Marquis of Vallombrosa, expatiated on the Latin race, their great qualities, their vivacity, invention, vividness of perception, chivalrous valour, and sympathy with tradition. The northern races detested them, and the height of statesmanship was to combine the Latin races into an organised and active alliance against the barbarism which menaced them. There had been for a short time a vacant place next to Endymion, when Baron Sergius, according to his quiet manner, stole into the room and slipped into the unoccupied seat. 'It is some time since we met,' he said, 'but I have heard of you. You are now a public man, and not a public character. That is a not unsatisfactory position.'

The prince listened apparently with much interest to the Marquis of Vallombrosa, occasionally asked him a question, and promoted discussion without himself

giving any opinion. Baron Sergius never spoke except to Endymion, and then chiefly social inquiries about Lord and Lady Roehampton, their good friends the Neuchatels, and frequently about Mr. Sidney Wilton, whom, it appeared, he had known years ago, and intimately. After dinner the guests, on the return to the saloon, ranged themselves in a circle, but not too formally, and the prince moving round addressed each of them in turn. When this royal ceremony was concluded, the prince motioned to the Marquis of Vallombrosa to accompany him, and then they repaired to an adjacent saloon, the door of which was open, but where they could converse without observation. The Duke of St. Angelo amused the remaining guests with all the resources of a man practised in making people feel at their ease, and in this he was soon greatly assisted by Mr. Waldershare, who was unable to dine with the prince to-day, but who seemed to take much interest in this arrival of the representatives of the Latin race.

Baron Sergius and Endymion were sitting together rather apart from the rest. The Baron said, 'You have heard to-day a great deal about the Latin race, their wondrous qualities, their peculiar destiny, their possible danger. It is a new idea, or rather a new phrase, that I observe is now getting into the political world, and is probably destined to produce consequences. No man will treat with indifference the principle of race. It is the key of history, and why history is often so confused is that it has been written by men who were ignorant of this principle and all the knowledge it involves. As one who may become a statesman and assist in governing mankind, it is necessary that you should not be insensible to it;

whether you encounter its influence in communities or in individuals, its qualities must ever be taken into account. But there is no subject which more requires discriminating knowledge, or where your illustrating principle, if you are not deeply founded, may not chance to turn out a will-o'-the-wisp. Now this great question of the Latin race, by which M. de Vallombrosa may succeed in disturbing the world—it might be well to inquire where the Latin race is to be found. In the North of Italy, peopled by Germans and named after Germans, or in the South of Italy, swarming with the descendents of Normans and Arabs? Shall we find the Latin race in Spain, stocked by Goths, and Moors, and Jews? Or in France, where there is a great Celtic nation, occasionally mingled with Franks? Now I do not want to go into the origin of man and nations—I am essentially practical, and only endeavour to comprehend that with which I have personally to deal, and that is sufficiently difficult. In Europe I find three great races with distinct qualities—the Teutons, the Sclaves, and the Celts; and their conduct will be influenced by those distinctive qualities. There is another great race which influences the world, the Semites. Certainly, when I was at the Congress of Vienna, I did not believe that the Arabs were more likely to become a conquering race again than the Tartars, and yet it is a question at this moment whether Mehemet Ali, at their head, may not found a new empire in the Mediterranean. The Semites are unquestionably a great race, for among the few things in this world which appear to be certain, nothing is more sure than that they invented our alphabet. But the Semites now exercise a vast influence over affairs by their smallest though most peculiar family, the

Jews. There is no race gifted with so much tenacity, and such skill in organisation. These qualities have given them an unprecedented hold over property and illimitable credit. As you advance in life, and get experience in affairs, the Jews will cross you everywhere. They have long been stealing into our secret diplomacy, which they have almost appropriated; in another quarter of a century they will claim their share of open government. Well, these are races, men and bodies of men, influenced in their conduct by their particular organisation, and which must enter into all the calculations of a statesman. But what do they mean by the Latin race? Language and religion do not make a race—there is only one thing which makes a race, and that is blood.'

'But the prince,' said Endymion inquiringly; 'he seemed much interested in what M. de Vallombrosa was saying; I should like to know what his opinions are about the Latin race.'

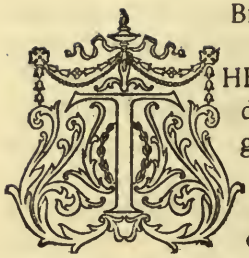
'The prince rarely gives an opinion,' said the baron. 'Indeed, as you well know, he rarely speaks; he thinks and he acts.'

'But if he acts on wrong information,' continued Endymion, 'there will probably be only one consequence.'

'The prince is very wise,' said the baron; 'and, trust me, knows as much about mankind, and the varieties of mankind, as any one. He may not believe in the Latin race, but he may choose to use those who do believe in it. The weakness of the prince, if he have one, is not want of knowledge, or want of judgment, but an over-confidence in his star, which sometimes seduces him into enterprises which he himself feels at the time are not perfectly sound.'

CHAPTER LVII.

Bridal Festivities.



HE interest of the town was now divided between the danger of the government and the new preacher who electrified the world at St. Rosicrucius. The Rev. Nigel Penruddock was not at all a popular preacher according to the vulgar acceptation of the term. He disdained all cant and clap-trap. He preached Church principles with commanding eloquence, and he practised them with unceasing devotion. His church was always open, yet his schools were never neglected; there was a perfect choir, a staff of disciplined curates, young and ascetic, while sacred sisters, some of patrician blood, fearless and prepared for martyrdom, were gliding about all the back slums of his ferocious neighbourhood. How came the Whigs to give such a church to such a person? There must have been some mistake. But how came it that all the Whig ladies were among the most devoted of his congregation? The government whips did not like it; at such a critical period too, when it was necessary to keep the Dissenters up to the mark! And there were Lady Montfort and Lady Roehampton never absent

on a Sunday, and their carriages, it was whispered, were often suspiciously near to St. Rosicrucius on week-days. Mr. Sidney Wilton too was frequently in Lady Roehampton's pew, and one day, absolutely my lord himself, who unfortunately was rarely seen at church — but then, as is well known, critical despatches always arrive on a Sunday morning — was successfully landed in her pew by Lady Roehampton, and was much struck indeed by what he heard. 'The fact is,' as he afterwards observed, 'I wish we had such a fellow on our bench in the House of Commons.'

About this time also there was another event, which, although not of so general an interest, much touched the feelings of Endymion, and this was the marriage of the Earl of Beaumaris with Imogene. It was solemnised in as private and quiet a manner as possible. Waldershare was the best man, and there were no bridesmaids. The only other persons invited by Mr. Rodney, who gave away the bride, were Endymion and Mr. Vigo.

One morning, a few days before the wedding, Sylvia, who had written to ask Lady Roehampton for an interview, called by appointment in St. James' Square. Sylvia was received by Lady Roehampton in her boudoir, and the interview was long. Sylvia, who by nature was composed, and still more so by art, was pale and nervous when she arrived, so much so that her demeanour was noticed by the groom of the chambers; but when she departed, her countenance was flushed and radiant, though it was obvious that she had been shedding tears. On the morning of the wedding, Lady Roehampton in her lord's brougham called for Endymion at the Albany, and

then they went together to the vestry of St. James' Church. Lord Beaumaris and Mr. Waldershare had arrived. The bridegroom was a little embarrassed when he was presented to Lady Roehampton. He had made up his mind to be married, but not to be introduced to a stranger, and particularly a lady; but Mr. Waldershare fluttered over them and put all right. It was only the perplexity of a moment, for the rest of the wedding party now appeared. Imogene, who was in a travelling dress, was pale and serious, but transcendently beautiful. She attempted to touch Lady Roehampton's hand with her lips when Myra welcomed her, but Lady Roehampton would not permit this, and kissed her. Everybody was calm during the ceremony except Endymion, who had been silent the whole morning. He stood by the altar with that convulsion of the throat and that sickness of the heart which accompany the sense of catastrophe. He was relieved by some tears which he easily concealed. Nobody noticed him, for all were thinking of themselves. After the ceremony, they all returned to the vestry, and Lady Roehampton with the others signed the registry. Lord and Lady Beaumaris instantly departed for the continent.

'A strange event!' exclaimed Lady Roehampton, as she threw herself back in the brougham and took her brother's hand. 'But not stranger than what has happened to ourselves. Fortune seems to attend on our ruined home. I thought the bride looked beautiful.'

Endymion was silent.

'You are not gay this morning, my dear,' said Lady Roehampton; 'they say that weddings are depressing. Now I am in rather high spirits. I am

very glad that Imogene has become Lady Beaumaris. She is beautiful, and dangerously beautiful. Do you know, my Endymion, I have had some uneasy moments about this young lady. Women are prescient in these matters, and I have observed with anxiety that you admired her too much yourself.'

'I am sure you had no reason, Myra,' said Endymion, blushing deeply.

'Certainly not from what you said, my dear. It was from what you did not say that I became alarmed. You seldom mentioned her name, and when I referred to her, you always turned the conversation. However, that is all over now. She is Countess of Beaumaris,' added Myra, dwelling slowly and with some unction on the title, 'and may be a powerful friend to you; and I am Countess of Roehampton, and am your friend, also not quite devoid of power. And there are other countesses, I suspect, on whose good wishes you may rely. If we cannot shape your destiny, there is no such thing as witchcraft. No, Endymion, marriage is a mighty instrument in your hands. It must not be lightly used. Come in and lunch; my lord is at home, and I know he wants to see you.'

CHAPTER LVIII.

Lady Montfort's Plan.

HAT was most remarkable, and most interesting, in the character of Berengaria was her energy. She had the power of exciting others to action in a degree rarely possessed. She had always some considerable object in contemplation, occasionally more than one, and never foresaw difficulties. Her character was, however, singularly feminine; she never affected to be a superior woman. She never reasoned, did not read much, though her literary taste was fine and fastidious. Though she required constant admiration and consequently encouraged it, she was not a heartless coquette. Her sensibility was too quick, and as the reign of her favourites was sometimes brief, she was looked upon as capricious. The truth is, what seemed whimsical in her affections was occasioned by the subtlety of her taste, which was not always satisfied by the increased experience of intimacy. Whenever she made a friend not unworthy of her, she was constant and entirely devoted.

At present, Berengaria had two great objects; one was to sustain the Whig government in its troubles,

and the other was to accomplish an unprecedented feat in modern manners, and that was no less than to hold a tournament, a real tournament, in the autumn, at the famous castle of her lord in the North of England.

The lord-lieutenant had not been in his county for two years; he had even omitted to celebrate Christmas at his castle, which had shocked everybody, for its revelry was looked upon almost as the tenure by which the Montforts held their estates. His plea of ill health, industriously circulated by all his agents, obtained neither sympathy nor credence. His county was rather a weak point with Lord Montfort, for though he could not bear his home, he was fond of power, and power depended on his territorial influence. The representation of his county by his family, and authority in the local parliamentary boroughs, were the compensations held out to him for the abolition of his nomination seats. His wife dexterously availed herself of this state of affairs to obtain his assent to her great project, which, it would appear, might not only amuse him, but, in its unprecedented magnificence and novelty, must sweep away all discontents, and gratify every class.

Lord Montfort had placed unlimited resources at the disposal of Berengaria for the fulfilment of her purpose, and at times even showed some not inconsiderable though fitful interest in her progress. He turned over the drawings of the various costumes and armour with a gracious smile, and, having picked up on such subjects a great deal of knowledge, occasionally made suggestions which were useful and sometimes embarrassing. The heralds were all called into council, and Garter himself deigned to regulate

the order of proceedings. Some of the finest gentlemen in London, of both parties in the state, passed the greater part of their spring mornings in jousting, and in practising all the manœuvres of the lists. Lady Montfort herself was to be the Queen of the Tournament, and she had prevailed on Lady Roehampton to accept the supreme office of Queen of Beauty.

It was the early part of May, and Zenobia held one of her great assemblies. Being in high good humour, sanguine and prophetic of power, she had asked all the great Whig ladies, and, the times being critical, they had come. Berengaria seemed absorbed by the details of her tournament. She met many of her knights, and she conferred with them all; the Knight of the Bleeding Heart, the Knight of Roses, the Knight of the Crystal Shield.

Endymion, who was not to be a knight, but a gentleman-at-arms in attendance on the Queen of the Tournament, mentioned that Prince Florestan much wished to be a jouster; he had heard this from the Duke of St. Angelo, and Lady Montfort, though she did not immediately sanction, did not absolutely refuse, the request.

Past midnight there was a sudden stir in the saloons. The House of Commons had broken up and many members were entering. There had been a division on the Jamaica question, and the ministers had only a majority of five. The leader of the House of Commons had intimated, not to say announced, their consequent resignation.

'Have you heard what they say?' said Endymion anxiously to Lady Montfort.

'Yes, I heard; but do not look so grave.'

'Do I look grave?'

'As if it were the last day.'

'I fear it is.'

'I am not so sure. I doubt whether Sir Robert thinks it ripe enough; and after all, we are not in a minority. I do not see why we should have resigned. I wish I could see Lord Roehampton.'

Affairs did not proceed so rapidly as the triumphant Zenobia expected. They were out, no question about that; but it was not so certain who was in. A day passed and another day, and even Zenobia, who knew everything before anybody, remained in the dark. The suspense became protracted and even more mysterious. Almost a week had elapsed; noble lords and right honourable gentlemen were calling on Sir Robert every morning, according to the newspapers, but no one could hear from any authority of any appointment being really made. At last, there was a whisper very late one night at Crockford's, which was always better informed on these matters than the political clubs, and people looked amazed, and stared incredulously in each other's faces. But it was true; there was a hitch, and in four-and-twenty hours the cause of the hitch was known. It seemed that the ministry really had resigned, but Berengaria, Countess of Montfort, had not followed their example.

What a dangerous woman! even wicked! Zenobia was for sending her to the Tower at once. 'It was clearly impossible,' she declared, 'for Sir Robert to carry on affairs with such a Duchesse de Longueville always at the ear of our young Queen, under the pretence, forsooth, of being the friend of Her Majesty's youth.'

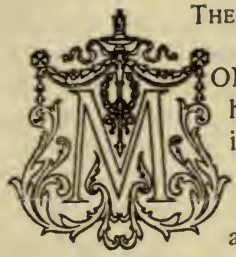
This was the famous Bed-Chamber Plot, in which the Conservative leaders, as is now generally admit-

ted, were decidedly in error, and which terminated in the return of the Whigs to office.

'But we must reconstruct,' said Lady Montfort to the Prime Minister. 'Sidney Wilton must be Secretary of State. And you,' she said to Endymion, when she communicated to him the successful result of her interference, 'you will go with him. It is a great thing at your age to be private secretary to a Secretary of State.'

CHAPTER LIX.

The Grand Tournament.



ONTFORT CASTLE was the stronghold of England against the Scotch invader. It stood on a high and vast table-land with the town of Montfort on one side at its feet, and on the other a wide-spreading and sylvan domain, herded with deer of various races, and terminating in pine forests; beyond them moors and mountains. The donjon keep, tall and grey, that had arrested the Douglas, still remained intact, and many an ancient battlement; but the long list of the Lords of Montfort had successively added to the great structure according to the genius of the times, so that still with the external appearance generally of a feudal castle, it combined in its various courts and quadrangles all the splendour and convenience of a modern palace.

But though it had witnessed many scenes and sights, and as strange ones as any old walls in this ancient land, it may be doubted whether the keep of Montfort ever looked down on anything more rare than the life that was gathering and disporting itself in its towers and halls, and courts and parks, and forest chase, in the memorable autumn of this year.

Berengaria had repaired to her castle full of triumph; her lord, in high good humour, admiring his wife for her energy, yet with a playful malice apparently enjoying the opportunity of showing that the chronology of her arrangements was confused, and her costume incorrect. They had good-naturedly taken Endymion down with them; for travelling to the Border in those times was a serious affair for a clerk in a public office. Day after day the other guests arrived; the rivals in the tourney were among the earliest, for they had to make themselves acquainted with the land which was to be the scene of their exploits. There came the Knights of the Griffin, and the Dragon, and the Black Lion and the Golden Lion, and the Dolphin and the Stag's Head, and they were all always scrupulously addressed by their chivalric names instead of by the Tommys and the Jemmys that circulated in the affectionate circle of White's, or the Gusseys and the Regys of Belgravian tea-parties. After a time duly appeared the Knight of the White Rose, whose armour shielded the princely form of Florestan; and this portion of the company was complete when the Black Knight at length reached the castle, who had been detained by his attendance on a conference at St. James', in the character of the Count of Ferroll.

If anything could add to the delight and excitement of Berengaria, it would seem to be the arrival of the Count of Ferroll.

Other guests gradually appeared, who were to sustain other characters in the great pageant. There was the Judge of Peace, and the Knight Marshal of the Lists, and the Jester, who was to ride on a caparisoned mule trapped with bells, and himself bearing a

sceptre. Mr. Sidney Wilton came down, who had promised to be King of the Tournament; and, though rather late, for my lord had been detained by the same cause as the Count of Ferroll, at length arrived the Queen of Beauty herself.

If the performance, to which all contiguous Britain intended to repair — for irrespective of the railroads, which now began sensibly to affect the communications in the North of England, steamers were chartering from every port, within one hundred miles' distance, for passengers to the Montfort tournament — were equal to the preparation, the affair must be a great success. The grounds round the castle seemed to be filled every day with groups of busy persons in fanciful costume, all practising their duties and rehearsing their parts; swordsmen and bowmen, and seneschals and esquires, and grooms and pages, and heralds in tabards, and pursuivants, and banner-bearers. The splendid pavilions of the knights were now completed, and the gorgeous throne of the Queen of Beauty, surrounded by crimson galleries, tier above tier, for thousands of favoured guests, was receiving only its last stroke of magnificence. The mornings passed in a feverish whirl of curiosity, and preparation, and excitement, and some anxiety. Then succeeded the banquet, where nearly one hundred guests were every day present; but the company were so absorbed in the impending event that none expected or required, in the evenings, any of the usual schemes or sources of amusement that abound in country houses. Comments on the morning, and plans for the morrow, engrossed all thought and conversation, and my lord's band was just a due accompaniment that filled the pauses when perplexities arrested talk, or deftly

blended with some whispered phrase almost as sweet or thrilling as the notes of the cornet-à-piston.

'I owe my knighthood to you,' said Prince Florestan to Lady Roehampton, 'as I do everything in this country that is agreeable.'

'You cannot be my knight,' replied Lady Roehampton, 'because I am told I am the sovereign of all the chivalry, but you have my best wishes.'

'All that I want in life,' said the prince, 'are your good wishes.'

'I fear they are barren.'

'No, they are inspiring,' said the prince with unusual feeling. 'You brought me good fortune. From the moment I saw you, light fell upon my life.'

'Is not that an exaggerated phrase?' said Lady Roehampton with a smile, 'because I happened to get you a ticket for a masquerade.'

'I was thinking of something else,' said the prince pensively; 'but life is a masquerade; at least mine has been.'

'I think yours, sir, is a most interesting life,' said Lady Roehampton, 'and, were I you, I would not quarrel with my destiny.'

'My destiny is not fulfilled,' said the prince. 'I have never quarrelled with it, and am least disposed to do so at this moment.'

'Mr. Sidney Wilton was speaking to me very much the other day about your royal mother, sir, Queen Agrippina. She must have been fascinating.'

'I like fascinating women,' said the prince, 'but they are rare.'

'Perhaps it is better it should be so,' said Lady Roehampton, 'for they are apt—are they not?—to disturb the world.'

'I confess I like to be bewitched,' said the prince, 'and I do not care how much the world is disturbed.'

'But is not the world very well as it is?' said Lady Roehampton. 'Why should we not be happy and enjoy it?'

'I do enjoy it,' replied Prince Florestan, 'especially at Montfort Castle; I suppose there is something in the air that agrees with one. But enjoyment of the present is consistent with objects for the future.'

'Ah! now you are thinking of your great affairs — of your kingdom. My woman's brain is not equal to that.'

'I think your brain is quite equal to kingdoms,' said the prince, with a serious expression, and speaking in even a lower voice, 'but I was not thinking of my kingdom. I leave that to fate; I believe it is destined to be mine, and therefore occasions me thought, but not anxiety. I was thinking of something else than kingdoms, and of which unhappily I am not so certain — of which I am most uncertain — of which I fear I have no chance — and yet which is dearer to me than even my crown.'

'What can that be?' said Lady Roehampton, with unaffected wonderment.

''Tis a secret of chivalry,' said Prince Florestan, 'and I must never disclose it.'

'It is a wonderful scene,' said Adriana Neuchatel to Endymion, who had been for some time conversing with her. 'I had no idea that I should be so much amused by anything in society. But then, it is so unlike anything one has ever seen.'

Mrs. Neuchatel had not accompanied her husband and her daughter to the Montfort Tournament. Mr. Neuchatel required a long holiday, and after the

tournament he was to take Adriana to Scotland. Mrs. Neuchatel shut herself up at Hainault, which it seemed she had never enjoyed before. She could hardly believe it was the same place, freed from its daily invasions by the House of Commons and the Stock Exchange. She had never lived so long without seeing an ambassador or a cabinet minister, and it was quite a relief. She wandered in the gardens, and drove her pony-chair in forest glades. She missed Adriana very much, and for a few days always expected her to enter the room when the door opened; and then she sighed, and then she flew to her easel, or buried herself in some sublime cantata of her favourite master, Beethoven. Then came the most wonderful performance of the whole day, and that was the letter, never missed, to Adriana.

Considering that she lived alone, and in a spot with which her daughter was quite familiar, it was really marvellous that the mother should every day be able to fill so many interesting and impassioned pages. But Mrs. Neuchatel was a fine penwoman; her feelings were her facts, and her ingenious observations of art and nature were her news. After the first fever of separation, reading was always a resource to her, for she was a great student. She was surrounded by all the literary journals and choice publications of Europe, and there scarcely was a branch of science and learning with which she was not sufficiently familiar to be able to comprehend the stir and progress of the European mind. Mrs. Neuchatel had contrived to get rid of the chief cook by sending him on a visit to Paris, so she could, without cavil, dine off a cutlet and seltzer-water in her boudoir. Sometimes, not merely for distraction, but more from a sense of

duty, she gave festivals to her schools; and when she had lived like a princely prisoner of state alone for a month, or rather like one on a desert isle who sighs to see a sail, she would ask a great geologist and his wife to pay her a visit, or some professor, who, though himself not worth a shilling, had some new plans, which really sounded quite practical, for the more equal distribution of wealth.

'And who is your knight?' said Endymion.

Adriana looked distressed.

'I mean, whom do you wish to win?'

'Oh, I should like them all to win!'

'That is good-natured, but then there would be no distinction. I know who is going to wear your colours — the Knight of the Dolphin.'

'I hope nothing of that kind will happen,' said Adriana, agitated. 'I know that some of the knights are going to wear ladies' colours, but I trust no one will think of wearing mine. I know the Black Knight wears Lady Montfort's.'

'He cannot,' said Endymion hastily. 'She is first lady to the Queen of Beauty; no knight can wear the colours of the Queen. I asked Sir Morte d'Arthur himself, and he told me there was no doubt about it, and that he had consulted Garter before he came down.'

'Well, all I know is that the Count of Ferroll told me so,' said Adriana; 'I sat next to him at dinner.'

'He shall not wear her colours,' said Endymion quite angrily. 'I will speak to the King of the Tournament about it directly.'

'Why, what does it signify?' said Adriana.

'You thought it signified when I told you Regy Sutton was going to wear your colours.'

'Ah! that is quite a different business,' said Adriana, with a sigh.

Reginald Sutton was a professed admirer of Adriana, rode with her whenever he could, and danced with her immensely. She gave him cold encouragement, though he was the best-looking and best-dressed youth in England; but he was a determined young hero, not gifted with too sensitive nerves, and was a votary of the great theory that all in life was an affair of will, and that endowed with sufficient energy he might marry whom he liked. He accounted for his slow advance in London by the inimical presence of Mrs. Neuchatel, who he felt, or fancied, did not sympathise with him; while, on the contrary, he got on very well with the father, and so he was determined to seize the present opportunity. The mother was absent, and he himself in a commanding position, being one of the knights to whose exploits the eyes of all England were attracted.

Lord Roehampton was seated between an ambassadress and Berengaria, indulging in gentle and sweet-voiced raillery; the Count of Ferroll was standing beside Lady Montfort, and Mr. Wilton was opposite to the group. The Count of Ferroll rarely spoke, but listened to Lady Montfort with what she called one of his dark smiles.

'All I know is, she will never pardon you for not asking her,' said Lord Roehampton. 'I saw Bicester the day I left town, and he was very grumpy. He said that Lady Bicester was the only person who understood tournaments. She had studied the subject.'

'I suppose she wanted to be the Queen of Beauty,' said Berengaria.

'You are too severe, my dear lady. I think she would have been contented with a knight wearing her colours.'

'Well, I cannot help it,' said Berengaria, but somewhat doubtingly. And then, after a moment's pause, 'She is too ugly.'

'Why, she came to my fancy ball, and it is not five years ago, as Mary Queen of Scots!'

'That must have been after the Queen's decapitation,' said Berengaria.

'I wonder you did not ask Zenobia,' said Mr. Wilton.

'Of course I asked her, but I knew she would not come. She is in one of her hatreds now. She said she would have come, only she had half-promised to give a ball to the tenants at Merrington about that time, and she did not like to disappoint them. Quite touching, was it not?'

'A touch beyond the reach of art,' said Mr. Wilton; 'almost worthy of yourself, Lady Mortfort.'

'And what do you think of all this?' asked Lord Montfort of Nigel Penruddock, who, in a cassock that swept the ground, had been stalking about the glittering saloons like a prophet who had been ordained in Mayfair, but who had now seated himself by his host.

'I am thinking of what is beneath all this,' replied Nigel. A great revivification. Chivalry is the child of the Church; it is the distinctive feature of Christian Europe. Had it not been for the revival of Church principles, this glorious pageant would never have occurred. But it is a pageant only to the uninitiated. There is not a ceremony, a form, a phrase, a costume, which is not symbolic of a great truth or a high purpose.'

'I do not think Lady Montfort is aware of all this,' said her lord.

'Oh, yes!' said Nigel. 'Lady Montfort is a great woman—a woman who could inspire crusades and create churches. She might, and she will, I trust, rank with the Helenas and the Matildas.'

Lord Montfort gave a little sound, but so gentle that it was heard probably but by himself, which in common language would be styled a whistle—an articulate modulation of the breath which in this instance expressed a sly sentiment of humorous amazement.

'Well, Mr. Ferrars,' said Mr. Neuchatel, with a laughing eye, to that young gentleman, as he encountered Endymion passing by, 'and how are you getting on? Are we to see you to-morrow in a Milanese suit?'

'I am only a page,' said Endymion.

'Well, well, the old Italian saying is, "A page beats a knight," at least with the ladies.'

'Do not you think it very absurd,' said Endymion, 'that the Count of Ferroll says he shall wear Lady Montfort's colours? Lady Montfort is only the first lady of the Queen of Beauty, and she can wear no colours except the Queen's. Do not you think somebody ought to interfere?'

'Hem! The Count of Ferroll is a man who seldom makes a mistake,' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'So everybody says,' said Endymion rather testily; 'but I do not see that.'

'Now, you are a very young man,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'and I hope you will some day be a statesman. I do not see why you should not, if you are industrious and stick to your master, for Mr. Sidney

Wilton is a man who will always rise; but, if I were you, I would keep my eyes very much on the Count of Ferroll, for, depend on it, he is one of those men who sooner or later will make a noise in the world.'

Adriana came up at this moment, leaning on the arm of the Knight of the Dolphin, better known as Regy Sutton. They came from the tea-room. Endymion moved away with a cloud on his brow, murmuring to himself, 'I am quite sick of the name of the Count of Ferroll.'

The jousting-ground was about a mile from the castle, and though it was nearly encircled by vast and lofty galleries, it was impossible that accommodation could be afforded on this spot to the thousands who had repaired from many parts of the kingdom to the Montfort Tournament. But even a hundred thousand people could witness the procession from the castle to the scene of action. That was superb. The sun shone, and not one of the breathless multitude was disappointed.

There came a long line of men-at-arms and musicians and trumpeters and banner-bearers of the Lord of the Tournament, and heralds in tabards, and pursuivants, and then the Herald of the Tournament by himself, whom the people at first mistook for the Lord Mayor.

Then came the Knight Marshal on a caparisoned steed, himself in a suit of gilt armour, and in a richly-embroidered surcoat. A band of halberdiers preceded the King of the Tournament, also on a steed richly caparisoned, and himself clad in robes of velvet and ermine, and wearing a golden crown.

Then on a barded Arab, herself dressed in cloth of gold, parti-coloured with violet and crimson, came,

amidst tremendous cheering, the Queen of Beauty herself. Twelve attendants bore aloft a silken canopy, which did not conceal from the enraptured multitude the lustre of her matchless loveliness. Lady Montfort, Adriana, and four other attendant ladies, followed her majesty, two by two, each in gorgeous attire, and on a charger that vied in splendour with its mistress. Six pages followed next, in violet and silver.

The bells of a barded mule announced the Jester, who waved his sceptre with unceasing authority, and pelted the people with admirably prepared impromptus. Some in the crowd tried to enter into a competition of banter, but they were always vanquished.

Soon a large company of men-at-arms and the sounds of most triumphant music stopped the general laughter, and all became again hushed in curious suspense. The tallest and the stoutest of the Border men bore the gonfalon of the Lord of the Tournament. That should have been Lord Montfort himself; but he had deputed the office to his cousin and presumptive heir. Lord Montfort was well represented, and the people cheered his cousin Odo heartily, as in his suit of golden armour richly chased, and bending on his steed, caparisoned in blue and gold, he acknowledged their fealty with a proud reverence.

The other knights followed in order, all attended by their esquires and their grooms. Each knight was greatly applauded, and it was really a grand sight to see them on their barded chargers and in their panoply; some in suits of engraved Milanese armour, some in German suits of fluted polished steel; some in steel armour engraved and inlaid with gold. The Black Knight was much cheered, but no one commanded more admiration than Prince Florestan, in a

suit of blue damascened armour, and inlaid with silver roses.

Every procession must end. It is a pity, for there is nothing so popular with mankind. The splendid part of the pageant had passed, but still the people gazed and looked as if they would have gazed for ever. The visitors at the castle, all in ancient costume, attracted much notice. Companies of swordsmen and bowmen followed, till at last the seneschal of the castle, with his chamberlains and servitors, closed the spell-bound scene.

CHAPTER LX.

Jealous Pangs.

HE jousting was very successful; though some were necessarily discomfited, almost every one contrived to obtain some distinction. But the two knights who excelled and vanquished every one except themselves were the Black Knight and the Knight of the White Rose. Their exploits were equal at the close of the first day, and on the second they were to contend for the principal prize of the tournament, for which none else were entitled to be competitors. This was a golden helm, to be placed upon the victor's brow by the Queen of Beauty.

There was both a banquet and a ball on this day, and the excitement between the adventures of the morning and the prospects of the morrow was great. The knights, freed from their armour, appeared in fanciful dresses of many-coloured velvets. All who had taken part in the pageant retained their costumes, and the ordinary guests, if they yielded to mediæval splendour, successfully asserted the taste of Paris and its sparkling grace, in their exquisite robes, and wreaths and garlands of fantastic loveliness.

Berengaria, full of the inspiration of success, received the smiling congratulations of everybody, and repaid them with happy suggestions, which she poured forth with inexhaustible yet graceful energy. The only person who had a gloomy air was Endymion. She rallied him. 'I shall call you the Knight of the Woeful Countenance if you approach me with such a visage. What can be the matter with you?'

'Nothing,' said Endymion in a tone of sullen misery.

'There is something. I know your countenance too well to be deceived. What is the matter?'

'Nothing,' repeated Endymion, looking rather away.

The Knight of the Dolphin came up and said, 'This is a critical affair to-morrow, my dear Lady Montfort. If the Count of Ferroll is discomfited by the prince, it may be a *casus belli*. You ought to get Lord Roehampton to interfere and prevent the encounter.'

'The Count of Ferroll will not be discomfited,' said Lady Montfort. 'He is one of those men who never fail.'

'Well, I do not know,' said the Knight of the Dolphin musingly. 'The prince has a stout lance, and I have felt it.'

'He had the best of it this morning,' said Endymion rather bitterly. 'Every one thought so, and that it was very fortunate for the Count of Ferroll that the heralds closed the lists.'

'It might have been fortunate for others,' rejoined Lady Montfort. 'What is the general opinion?' she added, addressing the Knight of the Dolphin. 'Do not go away, Mr. Ferrars. I want to give you some directions about to-morrow.'

'I do not think I shall be at the place to-morrow,' muttered Endymion.

'What!' exclaimed Berengaria; but at this moment Mr. Sidney Wilton came up and said, 'I have been looking at the golden helm. It is entrusted to my care as King of the Tournament. It is really so beautiful that I think I shall usurp it.'

'You will have to settle that with the Count of Ferroll,' said Berengaria.

'The betting is about equal,' said the Knight of the Dolphin.

'Well, we must have some gloves upon it,' said Berengaria.

Endymion walked away.

He walked away, and the first persons that met his eye were the prince and the Count of Ferroll in conversation. It was sickening. They seemed quite gay, and occasionally examined together a paper which the prince held in his hand, and which was an official report by the heralds of the day's jousting. This friendly conversation might apparently have gone on for ever had not the music ceased and the count been obliged to seek his partner for the coming dance.

'I wonder you can speak to him,' said Endymion, going up to the prince. 'If the heralds had not—many think, too hastily—closed the lists this morning, you would have been the victor of the day.'

'My dear child! what can you mean?' said the prince. 'I believe everything was closed quite properly, and as for myself, I am entirely satisfied with my share of the day's success.'

'If you had thrown him,' said Endymion, 'he could not with decency have contended for the golden helm.'

'Oh! that is what you deplore,' said the prince. 'The Count of Ferroll and I shall have to contend for many things more precious than golden helms before we die.'

'I believe he is a very overrated man,' said Endymion.

'Why?' said the prince.

'I detest him,' said Endymion.

'That is certainly a reason why *you* should not overrate him,' said the prince.

'There seems a general conspiracy to run him up,' said Endymion with pique.

'The Count of Ferroll is the man of the future,' said the prince calmly.

'That is what Mr. Neuchatel said to me yesterday. I suppose he caught it from you.'

'It is an advantage, a great advantage, for me to observe the Count of Ferroll in this intimate society,' said the prince, speaking slowly, 'perhaps even to fathom him. But I am not come to that yet. He is a man neither to love nor to detest. He has himself an intelligence superior to all passion, I might say all feeling; and if, in dealing with such a being, we ourselves have either, we give him an advantage.'

'Well, all the same, I hope you will win the golden helm to-morrow,' said Endymion, looking a little perplexed.

'The golden casque that I am ordained to win,' said the prince, 'is not at Montfort Castle. This, after all, is but Mambrino's helmet.'

A knot of young dandies were discussing the chances of the morrow as Endymion was passing by, and as he knew most of them he joined the group.

'I hope to heaven,' said one, 'that the Count of Ferroll will beat that foreign chap to-morrow; I hate foreigners.'

'So do I,' said a second, and there was a general murmur of assent.

'The Count of Ferroll is as much a foreigner as the prince,' said Endymion rather sharply.

'Oh! I don't call him a foreigner at all,' said the first speaker. 'He is a great favourite at White's; no one rides cross country like him, and he is a deuced fine shot in the bargain.'

'I will back Prince Florestan against him either in field or cover,' said Endymion.

'Well, I don't know your friend,' said the young gentleman contemptuously, 'so I cannot bet.'

'I am sure your friend, Lady Montfort, my dear Dymy, will back the Count of Ferroll,' lisped a third young gentleman.

This completed the programme of mortification, and Endymion, hot and then cold, and then both at the same time, bereft of repartee, and wishing the earth would open and Montfort Castle disappear in its convulsed bosom, stole silently away as soon as practicable, and wandered as far as possible from the music and the bursts of revelry.

These conversations had taken place in the chief saloon, which was contiguous to the ball-room, and which was nearly as full of guests. Endymion, moving in the opposite direction, entered another drawing-room, where the population was sparse. It consisted of couples apparently deeply interested in each other. Some faces were radiant, and some pensive and a little agitated, but they all agreed in one expression, that they took no interest whatever in

the solitary Endymion. Even their whispered words were hushed as he passed by. and they seemed, with their stony, unsympathising glances, to look upon him as upon some inferior being who had intruded into their paradise. In short, Endymion felt all that embarrassment, mingled with a certain portion of self-contempt, which attends the conviction that we are what is delicately called *de trop*.

He advanced and took refuge in another room, where there was only a single, and still more engrossed pair; but this was even more intolerable to him. Shrinking from a return to the hostile chamber he had just left, he made a frantic rush forward with affected ease and alacrity, and found himself alone in the favourite morning-room of Lady Montfort.

He threw himself on a sofa, and hid his face in his hand, and gave a sigh, which was almost a groan. He was sick at heart; his extremities were cold, his brain was feeble. All hope, and truly all thought of the future, deserted him. He remembered only the sorrowful, or the humiliating, chapters in his life. He wished he had never left Hurstley. He wished he had been apprenticed to Farmer Thornberry, that he had never quitted his desk at Somerset House, and never known more of life than Joe's and the divan. All was vanity and vexation of spirit. He contemplated finishing his days in the neighbouring stream, in which, but a few days ago, he was bathing in health and joy.

Time flew on; he was unconscious of its course; no one entered the room, and he wished never to see a human face again, when a voice sounded, and he heard his name.

'Endymion!'

He looked up; it was Lady Montfort. He did not speak, but gave her, perhaps unconsciously, a glance of reproach and despair.

'What is the matter with you?' she said.

'Nothing.'

'That is nonsense. Something must have happened. I have missed you so long, but was determined to find you. Have you a headache?'

'No.'

'Come back; come back with me. It is so odd. My lord has asked for you twice.'

'I want to see no one.'

'Oh! but this is absurd — and on a day like this, when everything has been so successful, and every one is so happy.'

'I am not happy, and I am not successful.'

'You perfectly astonish me,' said Lady Montfort; 'I shall begin to believe that you have not so sweet a temper as I always supposed.'

'It matters not what my temper is.'

'I think it matters a great deal. I like, above all things, to live with good-tempered people.'

'I hope you may not be disappointed. My temper is my own affair, and I am content always to be alone.'

'Why! you are talking nonsense, Endymion.'

'Probably; I do not pretend to be gifted. I am not one of those gentlemen who cannot fail. I am not the man of the future.'

'Well! I never was so surprised in my life,' exclaimed Lady Montfort. 'I never will pretend to form an opinion of human character again. Now, my dear Endymion, rouse yourself, and come back with me. Give me your arm. I cannot stay another

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AFTER AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY GEORGE ALFRED WILLIAMS.

'I cannot go back,' said Endymion; 'I never wish to see anybody again.'

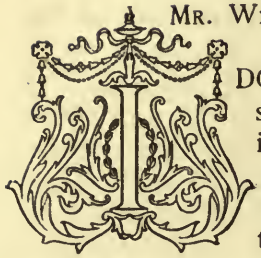
moment; I dare say I have already been wanted a thousand times.'

'I cannot go back,' said Endymion; 'I never wish to see anybody again. If you want an arm, there is the Count of Ferroll, and I hope you may find he has a sweeter temper than I have.'

Lady Montfort looked at him with a strange and startled glance. It was a mixture of surprise, a little disdain, some affection blended with mockery. And then exclaiming, 'Silly boy!' she swept out of the room.

CHAPTER LXI.

Mr. Wilton Proposes a Mission.



'I DO not like the prospect of affairs,' said Mr. Sidney Wilton to Endymion as they were posting up to London from Montfort Castle; a long journey, but softened in those days by many luxuries, and they had much to talk about.

'The decline of the revenue is not fitful; it is regular. Our people are too apt to look at the state of the revenue merely in a financial point of view. If a surplus, take off taxes; if a deficiency, put them on. But the state of the revenue should also be considered as the index of the condition of the population. According to my impression, the condition of the people is declining; and why? because they are less employed. If this spreads, they will become discontented and disaffected, and I cannot help remembering that, if they become troublesome, it is our office that will have to deal with them.'

'This bad harvest is a great misfortune,' said Endymion.

'Yes, but a bad harvest, though unquestionably a great, perhaps the greatest, misfortune for this coun-

try, is not the entire solution of our difficulties — I would say, our coming difficulties. A bad harvest touches the whole of our commercial system: it brings us face to face with the Corn Laws. I wish our chief would give his mind to that subject. I believe a moderate fixed duty of about twelve shillings a quarter would satisfy every one, and nothing then could shake this country.'

Endymion listened with interest to other views of his master, who descanted on them at much length. Private secretaries know everything about their chiefs, and Endymion was not ignorant that among many of the great houses of the Whig party, and indeed among the bulk of what was called the 'Liberal' party generally, Mr. Sidney Wilton was looked upon, so far as economical questions were concerned, as very crotchety, indeed a dangerous character. Lord Montfort was the only magnate who was entirely opposed to the Corn Laws, but then, as Berengaria would remark, 'Simon is against all laws; he is not a practical man.'

Mr. Sidney Wilton reverted to these views more than once in the course of their journey. 'I was not alarmed about the Chartists last year. Political trouble in this country never frightens me. Insurrections and riots strengthen an English government; they gave a new lease even to Lord Liverpool when his ministry was most feeble and unpopular; but economical discontent is quite another thing. The moment sedition arises from taxation, or want of employment, it is more dangerous and more difficult to deal with in this country than any other.'

'Lord Roehampton seemed to take rather a sanguine view of the situation after the Bed-Chamber

business in the spring,' observed Endymion, rather in an inquiring than a dogmatic spirit.

'Lord Roehampton has other things to think of,' said Mr. Wilton. 'He is absorbed, and naturally absorbed, in his department, the most important in the state, and of which he is master. But I am obliged to look at affairs nearer home. Now, this Anti-Corn-Law League, which they established last year at Manchester, and which begins to be very busy, though nobody at present talks of it, is, in my mind, a movement which ought to be watched. I tell you what; it occurred to me more than once during that wondrous pageant that we have just now been taking part in, the government wants better information than they have as to the state of the country, the real feelings and condition of the bulk of the population. We used to sneer at the Tories for their ignorance of these matters, but after all, we, like them, are mainly dependent on quarter sessions; on the judgment of a lord-lieutenant and the statistics of a bench of magistrates. It is true we have introduced into our subordinate administration at Whitehall some persons who have obtained the reputation of distinguished economists, and we allow them to guide us. But though ingenious men, no doubt, they are chiefly bankrupt tradesmen, who, not having been able to manage their own affairs, have taken upon themselves to advise on the conduct of the country — pedants and prigs at the best, and sometimes impostors. No; this won't do. It is useless to speak to the chief; I did about the Anti-Corn-Law League; he shrugged his shoulders and said it was a madness that would pass. I have made up my mind to send somebody, quite privately, to the great scenes of national labour. He must be somebody

whom nobody knows, and nobody suspects of being connected with the administration, or we shall never get the truth — and the person I have fixed upon is yourself.'

'But am I equal to such a task?' said Endymion modestly, but sincerely.

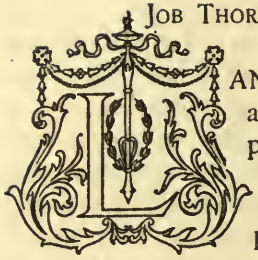
'I think so,' said Mr. Wilton, 'or, of course, I would not have fixed upon you. I want a fresh and virgin intelligence to observe and consider the country. It must be a mind free from prejudice, yet fairly informed on the great questions involved in the wealth of nations. I know you have read Adam Smith, and not lightly. Well, he is the best guide, though of course we must adapt his principles to the circumstances with which we have to deal. You have good judgment, great industry, a fairly quick perception, little passion — perhaps hardly enough; but that is probably the consequence of the sorrows and troubles of early life. But, after all, there is no education like adversity.'

'If it will only cease at the right time,' said Endymion.

'Well, in that respect, I do not think you have anything to complain of,' said Mr. Wilton. 'The world is all before you, and I mistake if you do not rise. Perseverance and tact are the two qualities most valuable for all men who would mount, but especially for those who have to step out of the crowd. I am sure no one can say you are not assiduous, but I am glad always to observe that you have tact. Without tact you can learn nothing. Tact teaches you when to be silent. Inquirers who are always inquiring never learn anything.'

CHAPTER LXII.

Job Thornberry in Public Life.



ANCASHIRE was not so wonderful a place forty years ago as it is at present, but, compared then with the rest of England, it was infinitely more striking. For a youth like Endymion, born and bred in our southern counties, the Berkshire downs varied by the bustle of Pall Mall and the Strand — Lancashire, with its teeming and toiling cities, its colossal manufactories and its gigantic chimneys, its roaring engines and its flaming furnaces, its tramroads and its railroads, its coal and its cotton — offered a far greater contrast to the scenes in which he had hitherto lived, than could be furnished by almost any country of the European continent.

Endymion felt it was rather a crisis in his life, and that his future might much depend on the fulfilment of the confidential office which had been entrusted to him by his chief. He summoned all his energies, concentrated his intelligence on the one subject, and devoted to its study and comprehension every moment of his thought and time. After a while, he had made Manchester his head-quarters. It was even then

the centre of a network of railways, and gave him an easy command of the contiguous districts.

Endymion had more than once inquired after the Anti-Corn-Law League, but had not as yet been so fortunate as to attend any of their meetings. They were rarer then than they afterwards soon became, and the great manufacturers did not encourage them. 'I do not like extreme views,' said one of the most eminent one day to Endymion. 'In my opinion, we should always avoid extremes;' and he paused and looked around, as if he had enunciated a heaven-born truth, and for the first time. 'I am a Liberal; so we all are here. I supported Lord Grey, and I support Lord Melbourne, and I am, in everything, for a Liberal policy. I don't like extremes. A wise minister should take off the duty on cotton wool. That is what the country really wants, and then everybody would be satisfied. No; I know nothing about this League you ask about, and I do not know any one — that is to say, any one respectable — who does. They came to me to lend my name. "No," I said, "gentlemen; I feel much honoured, but I do not like extremes;" and they went away. They are making a little more noise now, because they have got a man who has the gift of the gab, and the people like to go and hear him speak. But as I said to a friend of mine, who seemed half inclined to join them, "Well; if I did anything of that sort, I would be led by a Lancashire lad. They have got a foreigner to lead them, a fellow out of Berkshire; an agitator — and only a print-work after all. No; that will never do."'

Notwithstanding these views, which Endymion found very generally entertained by the new world in which he mixed, he resolved to take the earliest op-

portunity of attending the meeting of the League, and it soon arrived.

It was an evening meeting, so that workmen — or the operatives, as they were styled in this part of the kingdom — should be able to attend. The assembly took place in a large but temporary building; very well adapted to the human voice, and able to contain even thousands. It was fairly full to-night; and the platform, on which those who took a part in the proceedings, or who, by their comparatively influential presence, it was supposed, might assist the cause, was almost crowded.

'He is going to speak to-night,' said an operative to Endymion. 'That is why there is such an attendance.'

Remembering Mr. Wilton's hint about not asking unnecessary questions which often arrest information, Endymion did not inquire who 'he' was; and to promote communication merely observed, 'A fine speaker, then, I conclude?'

'Well, he is in a way,' said the operative. 'He has not got Hollaballoo's voice, but he knows what he is talking about. I doubt their getting what they are after; they have not the working-classes with them. If they went against truck, it would be something.'

The chairman opened the proceedings; but was coldly received, though he spoke sensibly and at some length. He then introduced a gentleman, who was absolutely an alderman, to move a resolution condemnatory of the Corn Laws. The august position of the speaker atoned for his halting rhetoric, and a city which had only just for the first time been invested with municipal privileges was hushed before a man who might in time even become a mayor.

Then the seconder advanced, and there was a general burst of applause.

'There he is,' said the operative to Endymion; 'you see they like him. Oh, Job knows how to do it!'

Endymion listened with interest, soon with delight, soon with a feeling of exciting and not unpleasing perplexity, to the orator; for he was an orator, though then unrecognised, and known only in his district. He was a pale and slender man, with a fine brow and an eye that occasionally flashed with the fire of a creative mind. His voice certainly was not like Hollaballoo's. It was rather thin, but singularly clear. There was nothing clearer except his meaning. Endymion never heard a case stated with such pellucid art; facts marshalled with such vivid simplicity, and inferences so natural and spontaneous and irresistible, that they seemed, as it were, borrowed from his audience, though none of that audience had arrived at them before. The meeting was hushed, was rapt in intellectual delight, for they did not give the speaker the enthusiasm of their sympathy. That was not shared, perhaps, by the moiety of those who listened to him. When his case was fairly before them, the speaker dealt with his opponents—some in the press, some in Parliament—with much power of sarcasm, but this power was evidently rather repressed than allowed to run riot. What impressed Endymion as the chief quality of this remarkable speaker was his persuasiveness, and he had the air of being too prudent to offend even an opponent unnecessarily. His language, though natural and easy, was choice and refined. He was evidently a man who had read, and not a little; and there was

no taint of vulgarity, scarcely a provincialism, in his pronunciation.

He spoke for rather more than an hour; and frequently during this time, Endymion, notwithstanding his keen interest in what was taking place, was troubled, it might be disturbed, by pictures and memories of the past that he endeavoured in vain to drive away. When the orator concluded, amid cheering much louder than that which had first greeted him, Endymion, in a rather agitated voice, whispered to his neighbour, 'Tell me—is his name Thornberry?'

'That is your time of day,' said the operative. 'Job Thornberry is his name, and I am on his works.'

'And yet you do not agree with him?'

'Well; I go as far as he goes, but he does not go so far as I go; that's it.'

'I do not see how a man can go much farther,' said Endymion. 'Where are his works? I knew your master when he was in the south of England, and I should like to call on him.'

'My employer,' said the operative. 'They call themselves masters, but we do not. I will tell you. His works are a mile out of town: but it seems only a step, for there are houses all the way. Job Thornberry and Co.'s Print-works, Pendleton Road—any one can guide you—and when you get there, you can ask for me, if you like. I am his overlooker, and my name is Enoch Craggs.'

CHAPTER LXIII.

Free Trade or Co-operation?

'YOU are not much altered,' said Thornberry, as he retained Endymion's hand, and he looked at him earnestly; 'and yet you have become a man. I suppose I am ten years your senior. I have never been back to the old place, and yet I sometimes think I should like to be buried there. The old man has been here, and more than once, and liked it well enough; at least, I hope so. He told me a good deal about you all; some sorrows, and, I hope, some joys. I heard of Miss Myra's marriage; she was a sweet young lady; the gravest person I ever knew; I never knew her smile. I remember they thought her proud, but I always had a fancy for her. Well, she has married a topsawyer—I believe the ablest of them all, and probably the most unprincipled; though I ought not to say that to you. However, public men are spoken freely of. I wish to heaven you would get him to leave off tinkering those commercial treaties that he is always making such a fuss about. More pernicious nonsense was never devised by man than treaties of commerce. However, their

precious most favoured nation clause will break down the whole concern yet. But you wish to see the works; I will show them to you myself. There is not much going on now, and the stagnation increases daily. And then, if you are willing, we will go home and have a bit of lunch—I live hard by. My best works are my wife and children: I have made that joke before, as you can well fancy.'

This was the greeting, sincere but not unkind, of Job Thornberry to Endymion on the day after the meeting of the Anti-Corn-Law League. To Endymion it was an interesting, and, as he believed it would prove, a useful encounter.

The print-works were among the most considerable of their kind at Manchester, but they were working now with reduced numbers and at half-time. It was the energy and the taste and invention of Thornberry that had given them their reputation, and secured them extensive markets. He had worked with borrowed capital, but had paid off his debt, and his establishment was now his own; but, stimulated by his success, he had made a consignment of large amount to the United States, where it arrived only to be welcomed by what was called the American crash.

Turning from the high road, a walk of half a mile brought them to a little world of villas; varying in style and size, but all pretty, and each in its garden. 'And this is my home,' said Thornberry, opening the wicket, 'and here is my mistress and the young folks'—pointing to a pretty woman, but with an expression of no inconsiderable self-confidence, and with several children clinging to her dress and hiding their faces at the unexpected sight of a stranger. 'My eldest is a boy, but he is at school,' said Thornberry.

'I have named him, after one of the greatest men that ever lived, John Hampden.'

'He was a landed proprietor,' observed Endymion rather drily; 'and a considerable one.'

'I have brought an old friend to take cheer with us,' continued Thornberry; 'one whom I knew before any here present; so show your faces, little people;' and he caught up one of the children, a fair child like its mother, long-haired and blushing like a Worcestershire orchard before harvest time. 'Tell the gentleman what you are.'

'A free-trader,' murmured the infant.

Within the house were several shelves of books well selected, and the walls were adorned with capital prints of famous works of art. 'They are chiefly what are called books of reference,' said Thornberry, as Endymion was noticing his volumes; 'but I have not much room, and, to tell you the truth, they are not merely books of reference to me—I like reading encyclopædias. The "Dictionary of Dates" is a favourite book of mine. The mind sometimes wants tone, and then I read Milton. He is the only poet I read—he is complete, and is enough. I have got his prose works too. Milton was the greatest of Englishmen.'

The repast was simple, but plenteous, and nothing could be neater than the manner in which it was served.

'We are teetotalers,' said Thornberry; 'but we can give you a good cup of coffee.'

'I am a teetotaler too at this time of the day,' said Endymion; 'but a good cup of coffee is, they say, the most delicious and the rarest beverage in the world.'

'Well,' continued Thornberry; 'it is a long time since we met, Mr. Ferrars — ten years. I used to think that in ten years one might do anything; and a year ago, I really thought I had done it; but the accursed laws of this blessed country, as it calls itself, have nearly broken me, as they have broken many a better man before me.'

'I am sorry to hear this,' said Endymion; 'I trust it is but a passing cloud.'

'It is not a cloud,' said Thornberry; 'it is a storm, a tempest, a wreck — but not only for me. Your great relative, my Lord Roehampton, must look to it, I can tell you that. What is happening in this country, and is about to happen, will not be cured or averted by commercial treaties — mark my words.'

'But what would cure it?' said Endymion.

'There is only one thing that can cure this country, and it will soon be too late for that. We must have free exchange.'

'Free exchange!' murmured Endymion thoughtfully.

'Why, look at this,' said Thornberry. 'I had been driving a capital trade with the States for nearly five years. I began with nothing, as you know. I had paid off all my borrowed capital; my works were my own, and this house is a freehold. A year ago I sent to my correspondent at New York the largest consignment of goods I had ever made and the best, and I cannot get the slightest return for them. My correspondent writes to me that there is no end of corn and bread-stuffs which he could send, if we could only receive them; but he knows very well he might as well try to send them to the moon. The people here are starving and want these bread-stuffs, and

they are ready to pay for them by the products of their labour — and your blessed laws prevent them!'

'But these laws did not prevent your carrying on a thriving trade with America for five years, according to your own account,' said Endymion. 'I do not question what you say; I am asking only for information.'

'What you say is fairly said, and it has been said before,' replied Thornberry; 'but there is nothing in it. We had a trade, and a thriving trade, with the States; though, to be sure, it was always fitful and ought to have been ten times as much, even during those five years. But the fact is, the state of affairs in America was then exceptional. They were embarked in great public works in which every one was investing his capital; shares and stocks abounded, and they paid us for our goods with them.'

'Then it would rather seem that they have no capital now to spare to purchase our goods?'

'Not so,' said Thornberry sharply, 'as I have shown; but were it so, it does not affect my principle. If there were free exchange, we should find employment and compensation in other countries, even if the States were logged, which I don't believe thirty millions of people with boundless territory ever can be.'

'But after all,' said Endymion, 'America is as little in favour of free exchange as we are. She may send us her bread-stuffs; but her laws will not admit our goods, except on the payment of enormous duties.'

'Pish!' said Thornberry; 'I do not care this for their enormous duties. Let me have free imports, and I will soon settle their duties.'

'To fight hostile tariffs with free imports,' said Endymion; 'is not that fighting against odds?'

'Not a bit. This country has nothing to do but to consider its imports. Foreigners will not give us their products for nothing; but as for their tariffs, if we were wise men, and looked to our real interests, their hostile tariffs, as you call them, would soon be falling down like an old wall.'

'Well, I confess,' said Endymion, 'I have for some time thought the principle of free exchange was a sound one; but its application in a country like this would be very difficult, and require, I should think, great prudence and moderation.'

'By prudence and moderation you mean ignorance and timidity,' said Thornberry scornfully.

'Not exactly that, I hope,' said Endymion; 'but you cannot deny that the home market is a most important element in the consideration of our public wealth, and it mainly rests upon the agriculture of the country.'

'Then it rests upon a very poor foundation,' said Thornberry. 'But if any persons should be more tempted than others by free exchange, it should be the great body of the consumers of this land, who pay unjust and excessive prices for every article they require. No, my dear Mr. Ferrars; the question is a very simple one, and we may talk for ever, and we shall never alter it. The laws of this country are made by the proprietors of land, and they make them for their own benefit. A man with a large estate is said to have a great stake in the country because some hundreds of people or so are more or less dependent on him. How has he a greater interest in the country than a manufacturer who has sunk £100,000 in ma-

chinery, and has a thousand people, as I had, receiving from him weekly wages? No home market, indeed! Pah! it is an affair of rent, and nothing more or less. And England is to be ruined to keep up rents. Are you going? Well, I am glad we have met. Perhaps we shall have another talk together some day. I shall not return to the works. There is little doing there, and I must think now of other things. The subscriptions to the League begin to come in apace. Say what they like in the House of Commons and the vile London press, the thing is stirring.'

Wishing to turn the conversation a little, Endymion asked Mrs. Thornberry whether she occasionally went to London.

'Never was there,' she said, in a sharp, clear voice; 'but I hope to go soon.'

'You will have a great deal to see.'

'All I want to see, and hear, is the Rev. Servetus Frost,' replied the lady. 'My idea of perfect happiness is to hear him every Sunday. He comes here sometimes, for his sister is settled here; a very big mill. He preached here a month ago. Should not I have liked the bishop to have heard him, that's all! But he would not dare to go; he could not answer a point.'

'My wife is of the Unitarian persuasion,' said Thornberry. 'I am not. I was born in our Church, and I keep to it; but I often go to chapel with my wife. As for religion generally, if a man believes in his Maker and does his duty to his neighbour, in my mind that is sufficient.'

Endymion bade them good-bye, and strolled musingly towards his hotel.

Just as he reached the works again, he encountered Enoch Craggs, who was walking into Manchester.

'I am going to our institute,' said Enoch. 'I do not know why, but they have put me on the committee.'

'And, I doubt not, they did very wisely,' said Endymion.

'Master Thornberry was glad to see you?' said Enoch.

'And I was glad to see him.'

'He has got the gift of speech,' said Enoch.

'And that is a great gift.'

'If wisely exercised, and I will not say he is not exercising it wisely. Certainly for his own purpose, but whether that purpose is for the general good—query?'

'He is against monopoly,' observed Endymion inquiringly.

'Query again?' said Enoch.

'Well; he is opposed to the Corn Laws.'

'The Corn Laws are very bad laws,' said Enoch, 'and the sooner we get rid of them the better. But there are worse things than the Corn Laws.'

'Hem!' said Endymion.

'There are the money laws,' said Enoch.

'I did not know you cared so much about them at Manchester,' said Endymion. 'I thought it was Birmingham that was chiefly interested about currency.'

'I do not care one jot about currency,' said Enoch; 'and, so far as I can judge, the Birmingham chaps talk a deal of nonsense about the matter. Leastwise, they will never convince me that a slip of irredeemable paper is as good as the young queen's head on a

twenty-shilling piece. I mean the laws that secure the accumulation of capital, by which means the real producers become mere hirelings, and really are little better than slaves.'

'But surely without capital we should all of us be little better than slaves?'

'I am not against capital,' replied Enoch. 'What I am against is capitalists.'

'But if we get rid of capitalists we shall soon get rid of capital.'

'No, no,' said Enoch, with his broad accent, shaking his head, and with a laughing eye. 'Master Thornberry has been telling you that. He is the most inveterate capitalist of the whole lot; and I always say, though they keep aloof from him at present, they will be all sticking to his skirts before long. Master Thornberry is against the capitalists in land; but there are other capitalists nearer home, and I know more about them. I was reading a book the other day about King Charles—Charles the First, whose head they cut off—I am very liking to that time, and read a good deal about it; and there was Lord Falkland, a great gentleman in those days, and he said, when Archbishop Laud was trying on some of his priestly tricks, that, if he were to have a pope, he would rather the pope were at Rome than at Lambeth. So I sometimes think, if we are to be ruled by capitalists, I would sooner, perhaps, be ruled by gentlemen of estate, who have been long among us, than by persons who build big mills, who come from God knows where, and, when they have worked their millions out of our flesh and bone, go God knows where. But perhaps we shall get rid of them all some day—landlords and mill-lords.'

'And whom will you substitute for them?'

'The producers,' said Enoch, with a glance half savage, half triumphant.

'What can workmen do without capital?'

'Why, they make the capital,' said Enoch; 'and if they make the capital, is it not strange that they should not be able to contrive some means to keep the capital? Why, Job was saying the other day that there was nothing like a principle to work upon. It would carry all before it. So say I. And I have a principle too, though it is not Master Thornberry's. But it will carry all before it, though it may not be in my time. But I am not so sure of that.'

'And what is it?' asked Endymion.

'Co-operation!'

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